

Overview of the Back-to-back, Double dipping, Multi-Year La Niña of 2010/11 to 2011/12

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Outline

- I. Recent Multi-year La Niña Sea Surface Temperatures (SST) compared with the Historical Record**
- II. N. Hemisphere Summer Anomalies in 2011**
- III. N. Hemisphere Winter Anomalies in 2011-12**

Second half (Tony Barnston) will cover the ENSO forecasts in more detail.

A “Multi-year La Niña” is defined by whether two consecutive NDJs are less than or equal to -0.5°C in Niño-3.4 (also known as the ONI).

Classification of La Niña is based on a de-trended Niño-3.4 index (ERSST.v3b data).

In the 1950-2012 record:

There have been 11 Multi-year La Niña events. 2011 is the 11th such event.

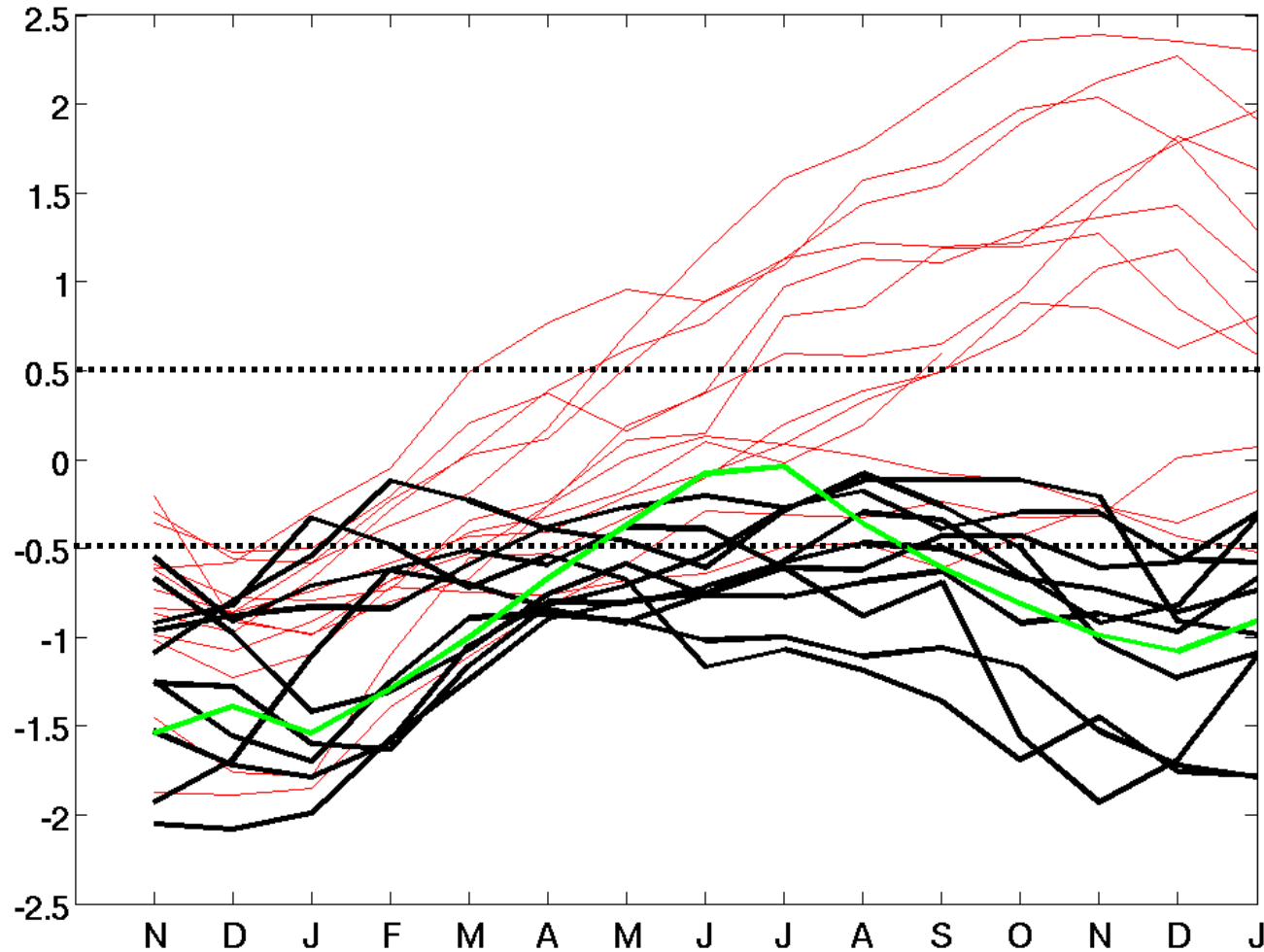
Five of these years occur before 1980. Six of these years occur after 1980.

“Pre-1980” includes NDJ 1954/55 to NDJ 1955/56,
NDJ 1955/56 to NDJ 1956/57
NDJ 1970/71 to NDJ 1971/72
NDJ 1973/74 to NDJ 1974/75
NDJ 1974/75 to NDJ 1975/76

“Post-1980” includes NDJ 1983/84 to NDJ 1984/85
NDJ 1995/96 to NDJ 1996/97
NDJ 1998/99 to NDJ 1999/00
NDJ 1999/00 to NDJ 2000/01
NDJ 2007/08 to NDJ 2008/09

NDJ 2010/11 to NDJ 2011/12 (excluding this recent event from sample)

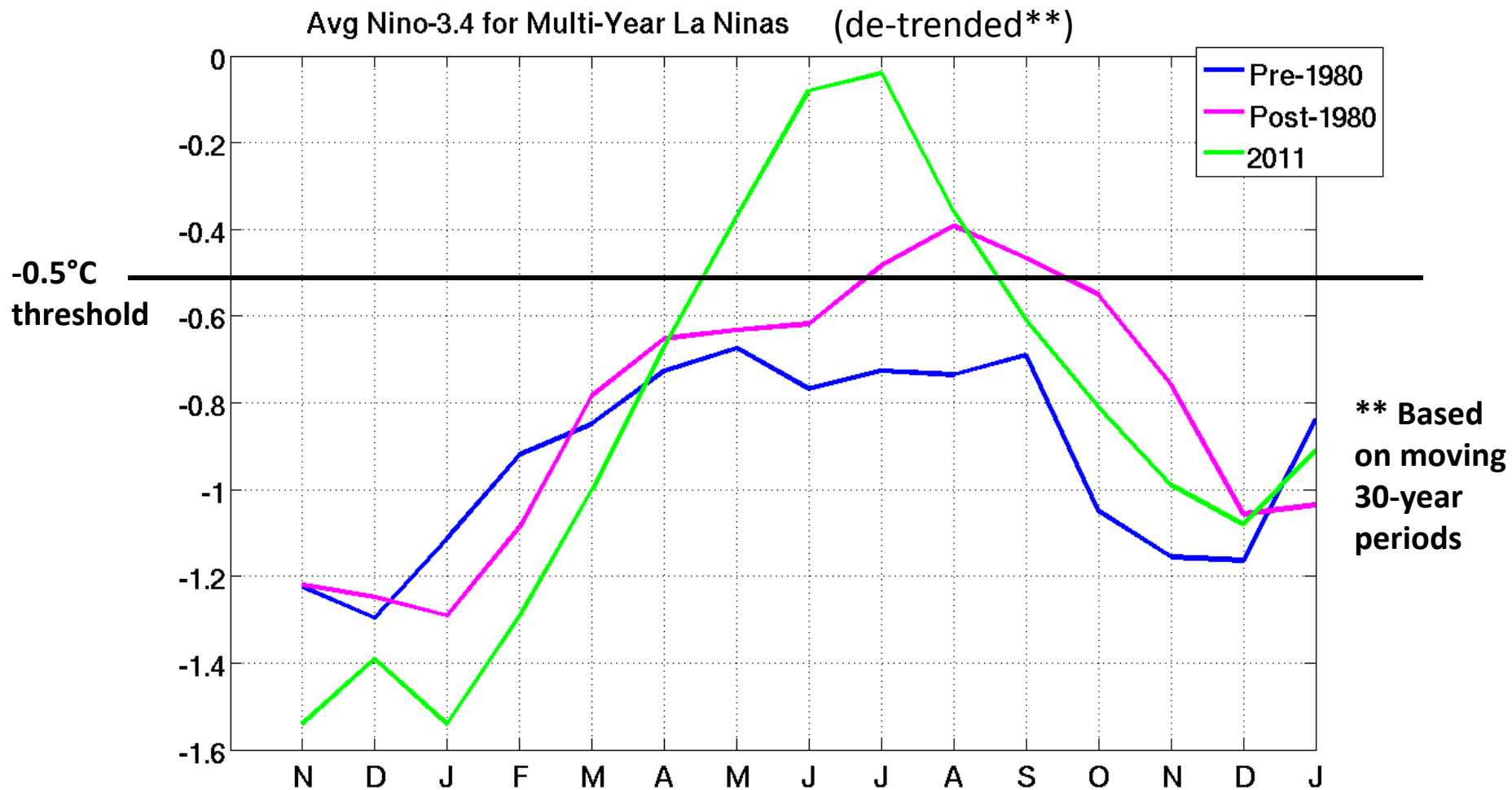
Evolution of Monthly Niño-3.4 values after La Niña events (defined by the first NDJ)



Black Lines are “Multi-Year La Niñas”

Red Lines are where the first winter (NDJ) qualified as La Niña but the following winter (second NDJ) did not

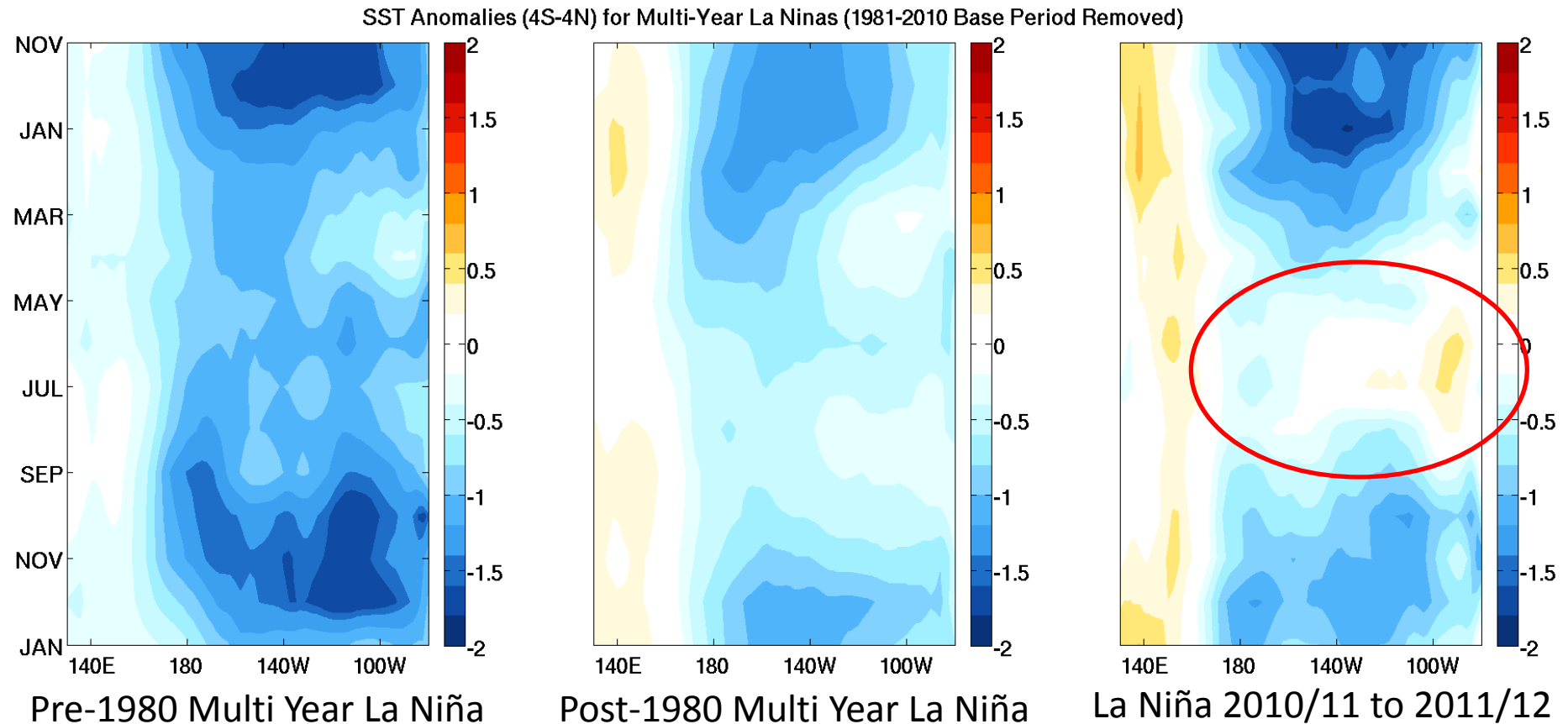
Green Line is NDJ 2010/11 to NDJ 2011/12



Post-1980 La Niña events – on average – return briefly to Neutral during July-September, whereas Pre-1980 La Niña events did not. However, the difference between the blue/pink lines is not statistically significant.

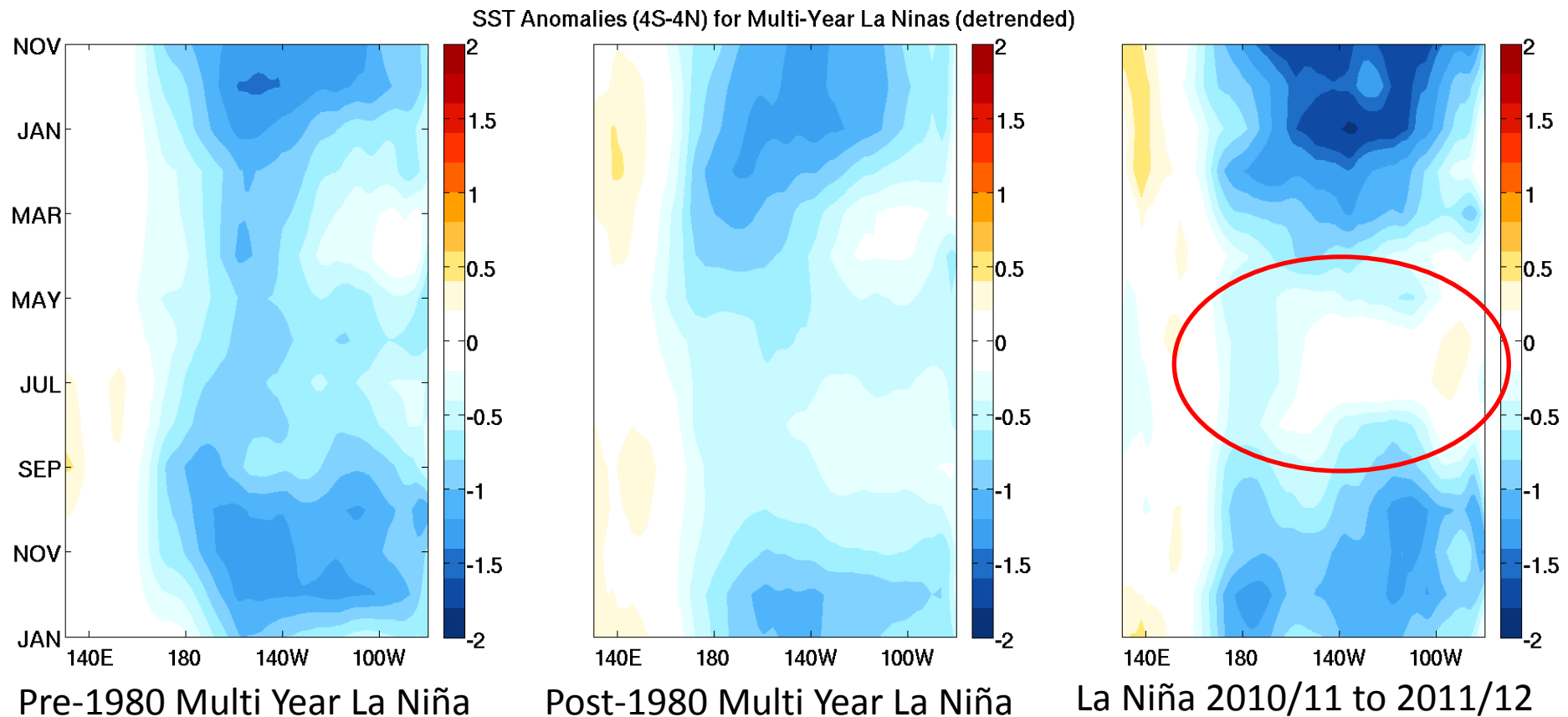
The most recent event (NDJ 2010/11 to NDJ 2011/12) returned to Neutral during the N. Hemisphere summer and then returned back to La Niña.

Evolution of equatorial Pacific SST anomalies for Multi-Year La Niñas (1981-2010 base period removed)



Recent Multi-Year La Niña event was associated with warmer SSTs during the intervening summer.

Same plots as previous slide, but here the SST anomaly data is detrended using all available months from 1950-2012.

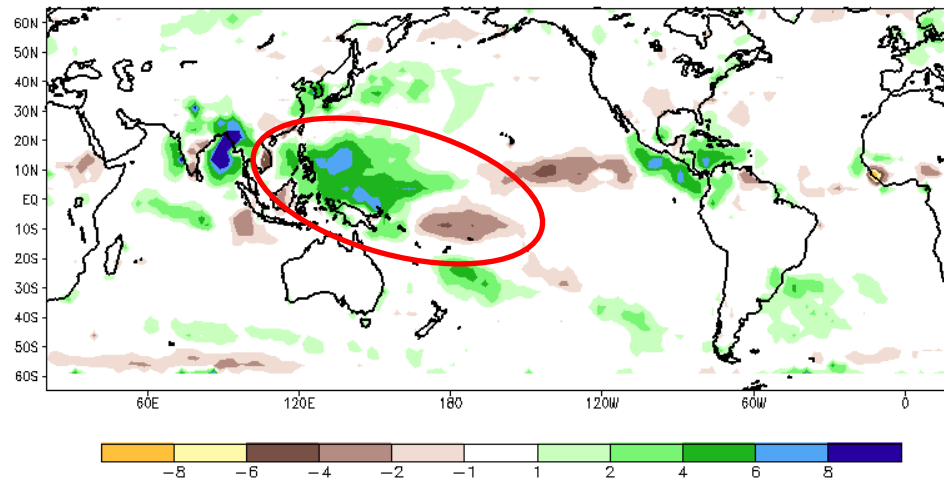


The amplitudes change slightly using de-trended SST data, but spatial patterns remain largely the same.

Despite the re-development of ENSO-neutral, we noted in our June, July, & August ENSO Diagnostics Discussions that the atmospheric pattern remained consistent with La Niña....

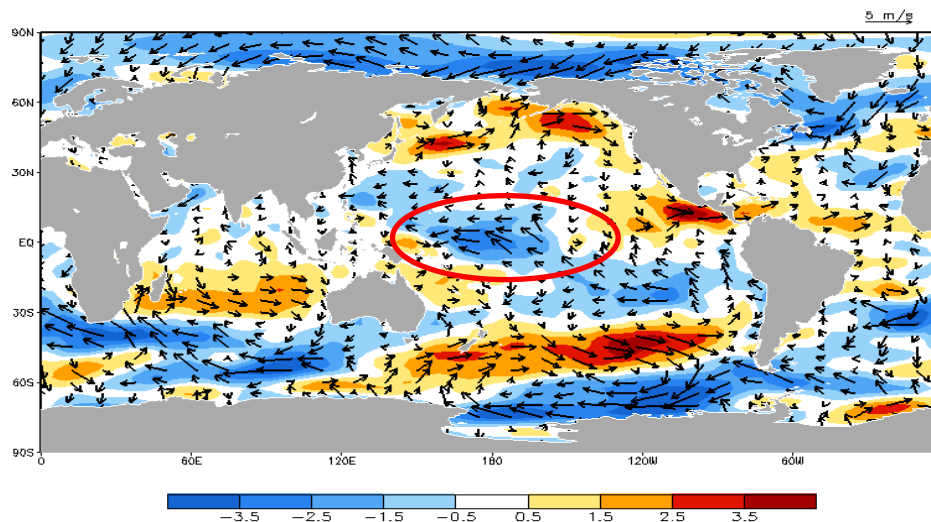
June-July-August (JJA) 2011 Average

Anomalous precipitation
(GPCP, 1979-95
base period)



- Convection above average near Papua New Guinea and east of the Philippines, with suppression evident near the Date Line

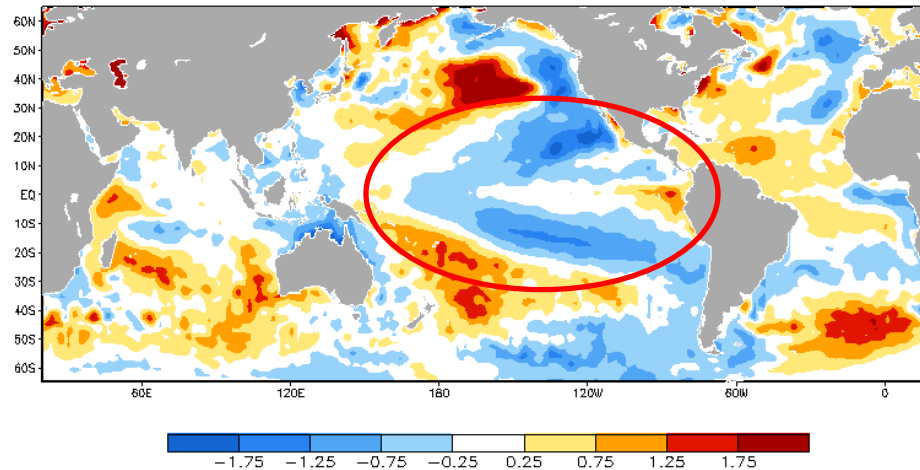
Anomalous 850-hPa winds
(vector) and zonal winds
(shading)



- Trade winds enhanced near Date Line

June-July-August (JJA) 2011 Average

Global SST
anomalies
(1981-2010
base period)



- Near average SSTs at equator.
- Strong off-equatorial SSTAs in the subtropical N. and S. Pacific

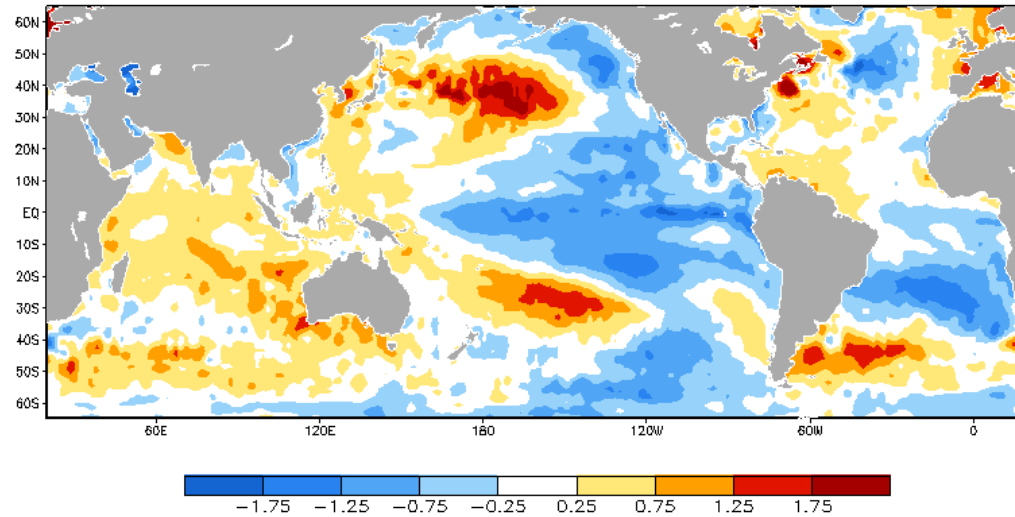
A La Niña Watch was issued on Aug. 4th

-- We were one of the first (if not the first) national agency to declare the return of La Niña on Sept. 8th 2011 after Niño-3.4 dropped below -0.5°C.

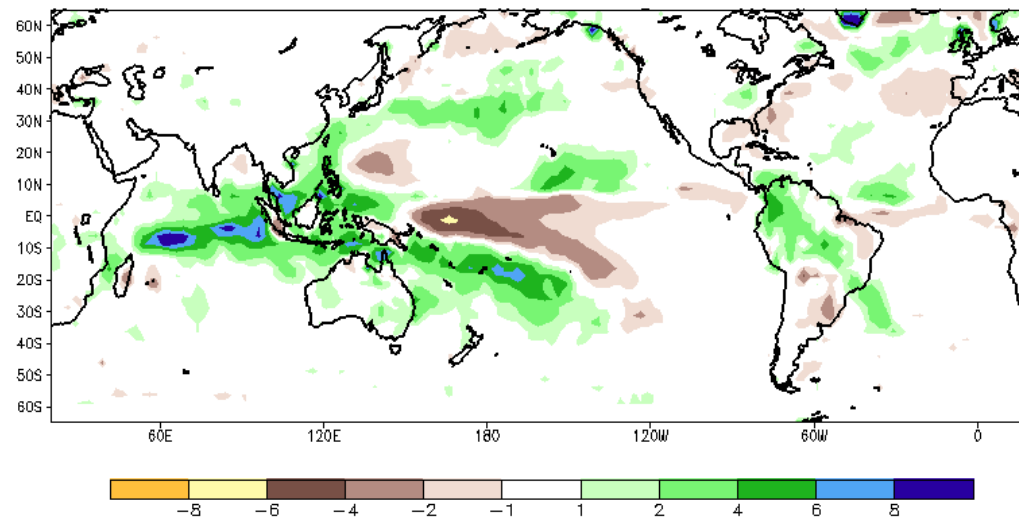
--- We already had La Niña-like atmospheric conditions across the tropical Pacific.

Wintertime (Nov-Jan) 2011/12 La Niña

SST anomalies
(OISST, 1981-2010
base period)

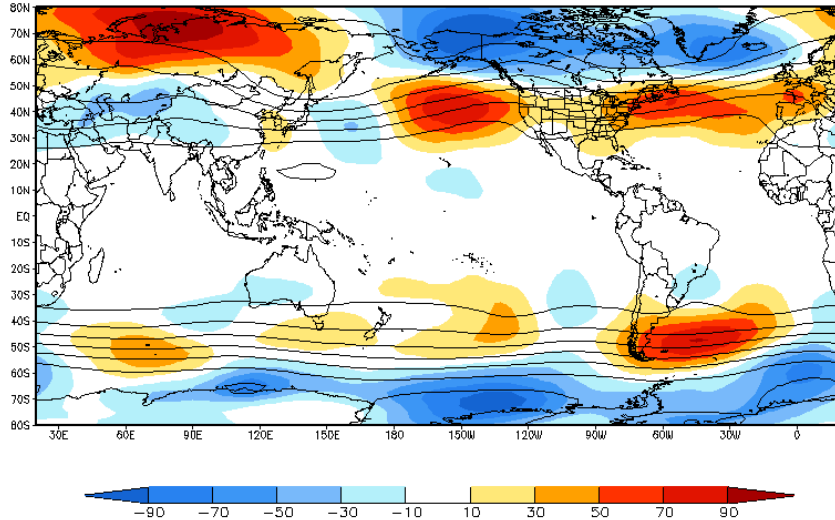


Anomalous precipitation
(GPCP, 1979-95
base period)

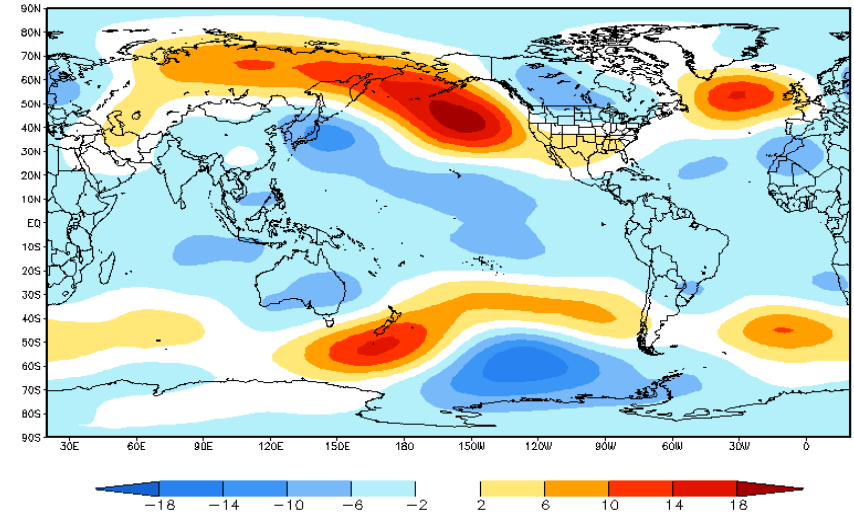


Wintertime (Nov-Jan) 2011/12 La Niña

Observed 500-hPa Geopotential
Height anomalies
(NCEP/NCAR, 1981-2010 base period)



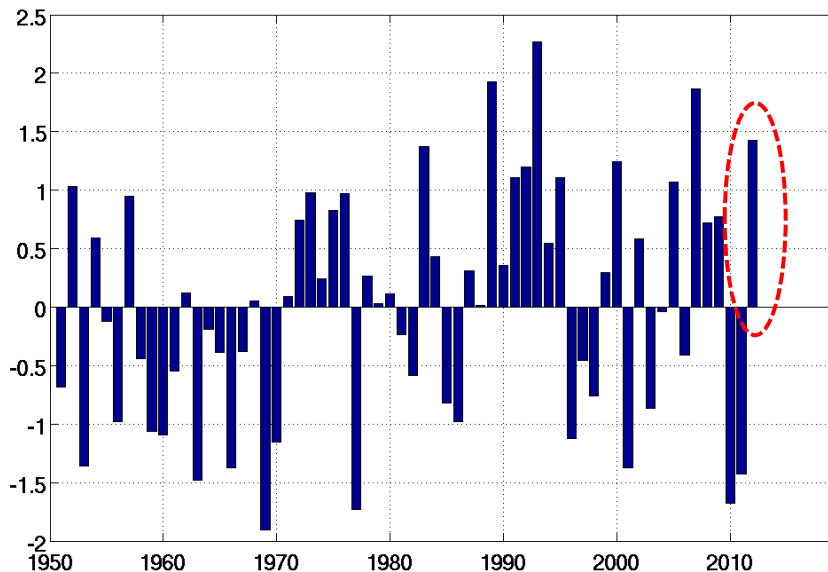
500-hPa Regression onto Niño-3.4 index
“Typical La Niña Pattern”



The AO/NAO was
strongly positive
during NDJ

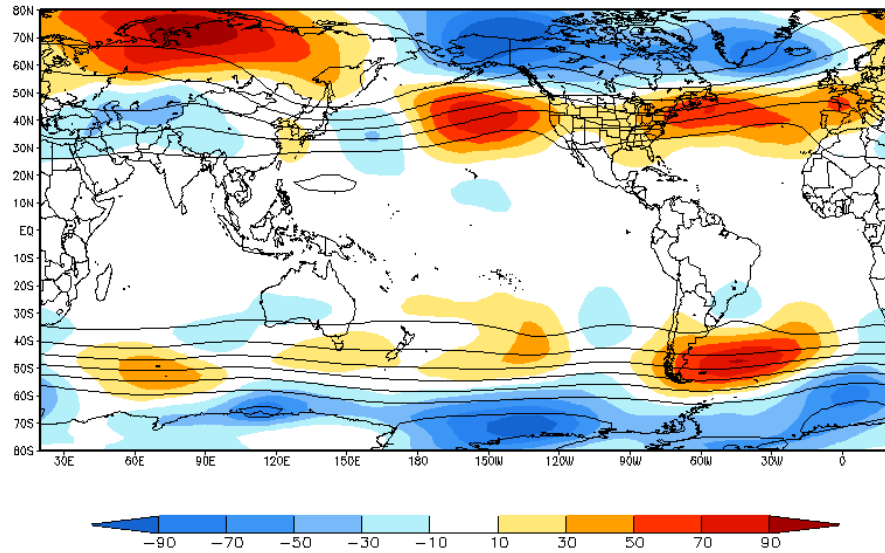
-- reflected in
height pattern
over much of N.
America/Atlantic

Standardized NDJ AO Value

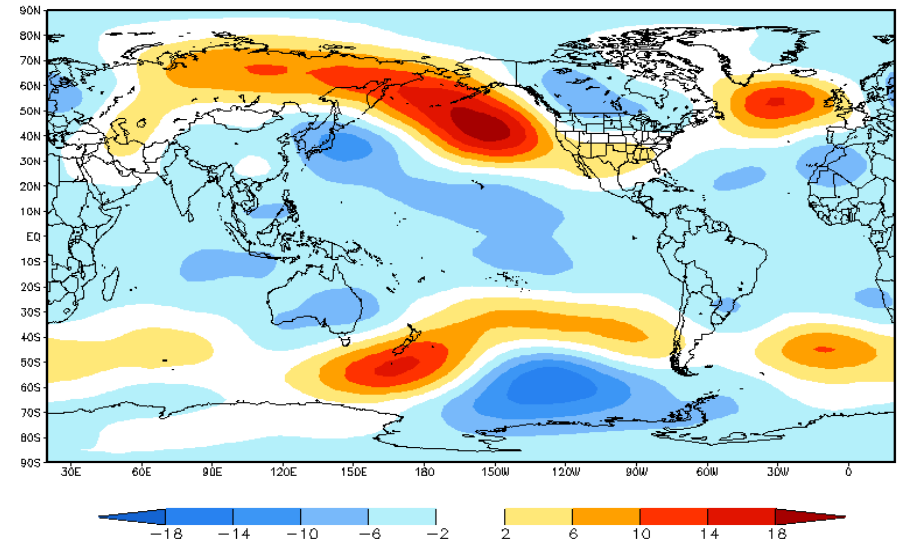


Wintertime (Nov-Jan) 2011/12 La Niña

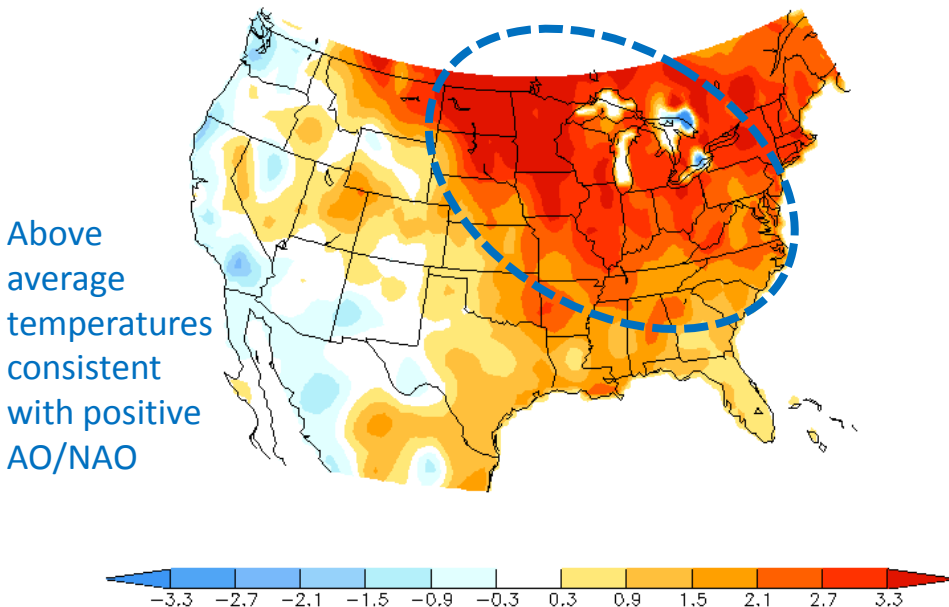
Observed 500-hPa GPH anomalies



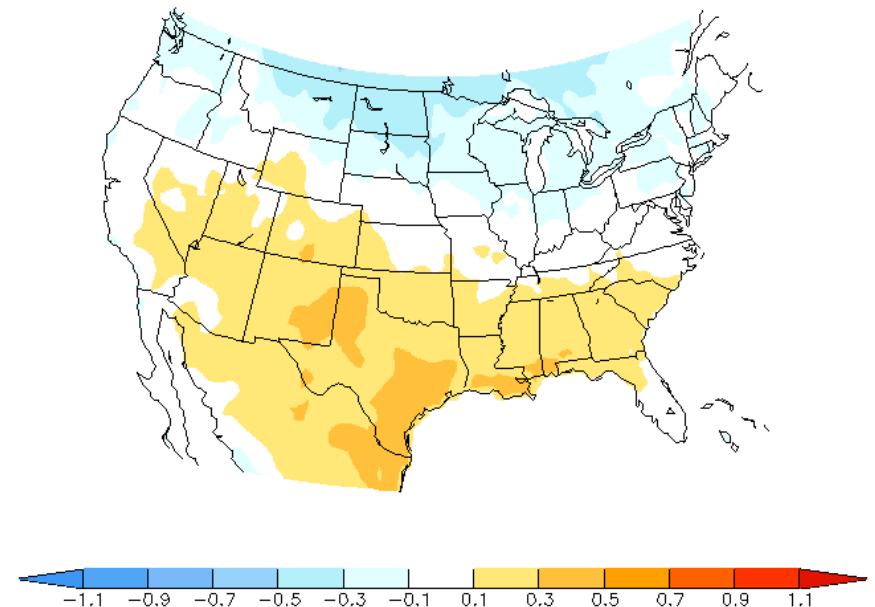
“Typical La Niña Pattern”



Observed Surface Temperature Anomalies

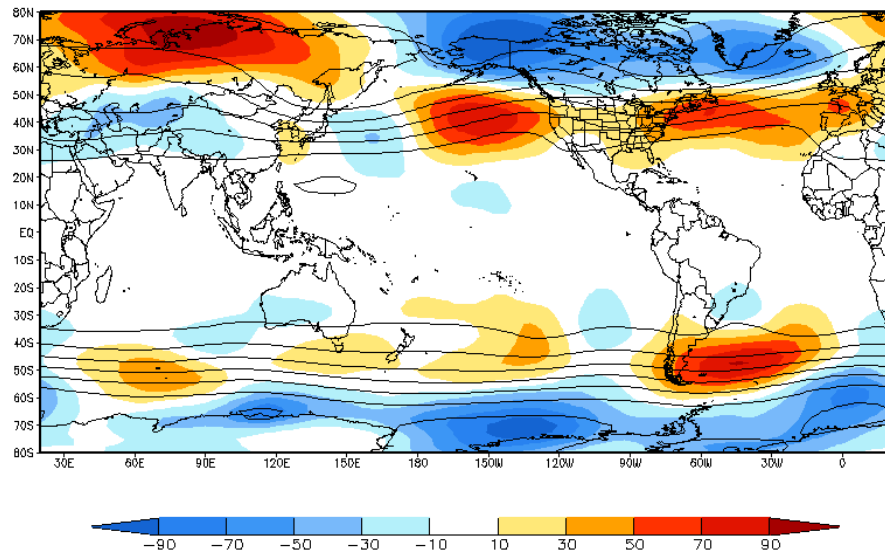


Temperature regression (Niño-3.4)

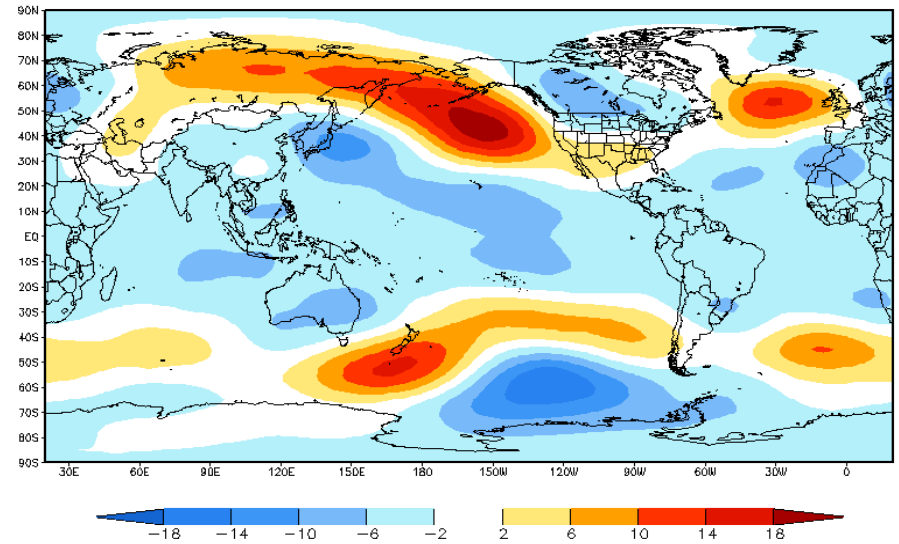


Wintertime (Nov-Jan) 2011/12 La Niña

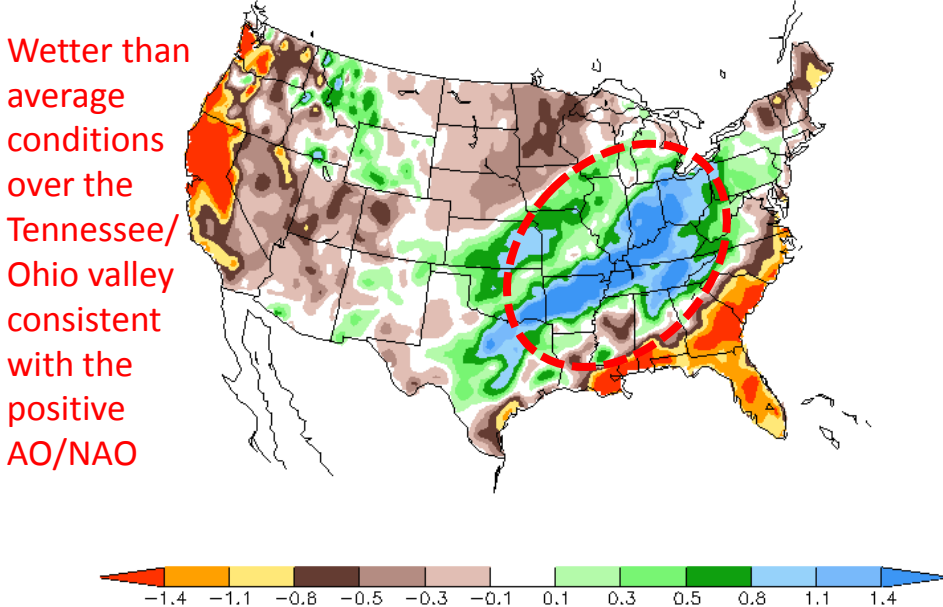
Observed 500-hPa GPH anomalies



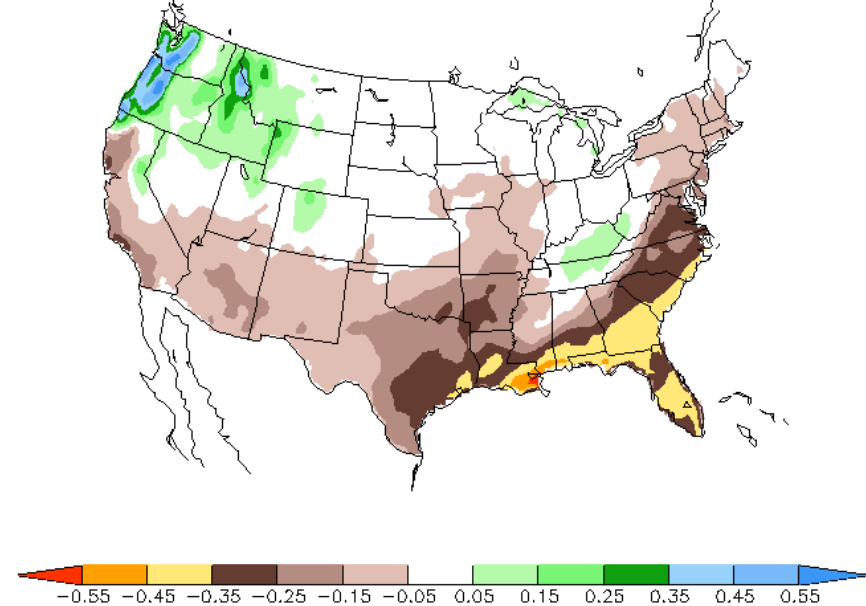
“Typical La Niña Pattern”



Observed Precipitation Anomalies



Precipitation regression (Niño-3.4)



Summary

- Summer 2011:

- warmest ever during back-to-back La Niña winters, with SSTs returning to Neutral

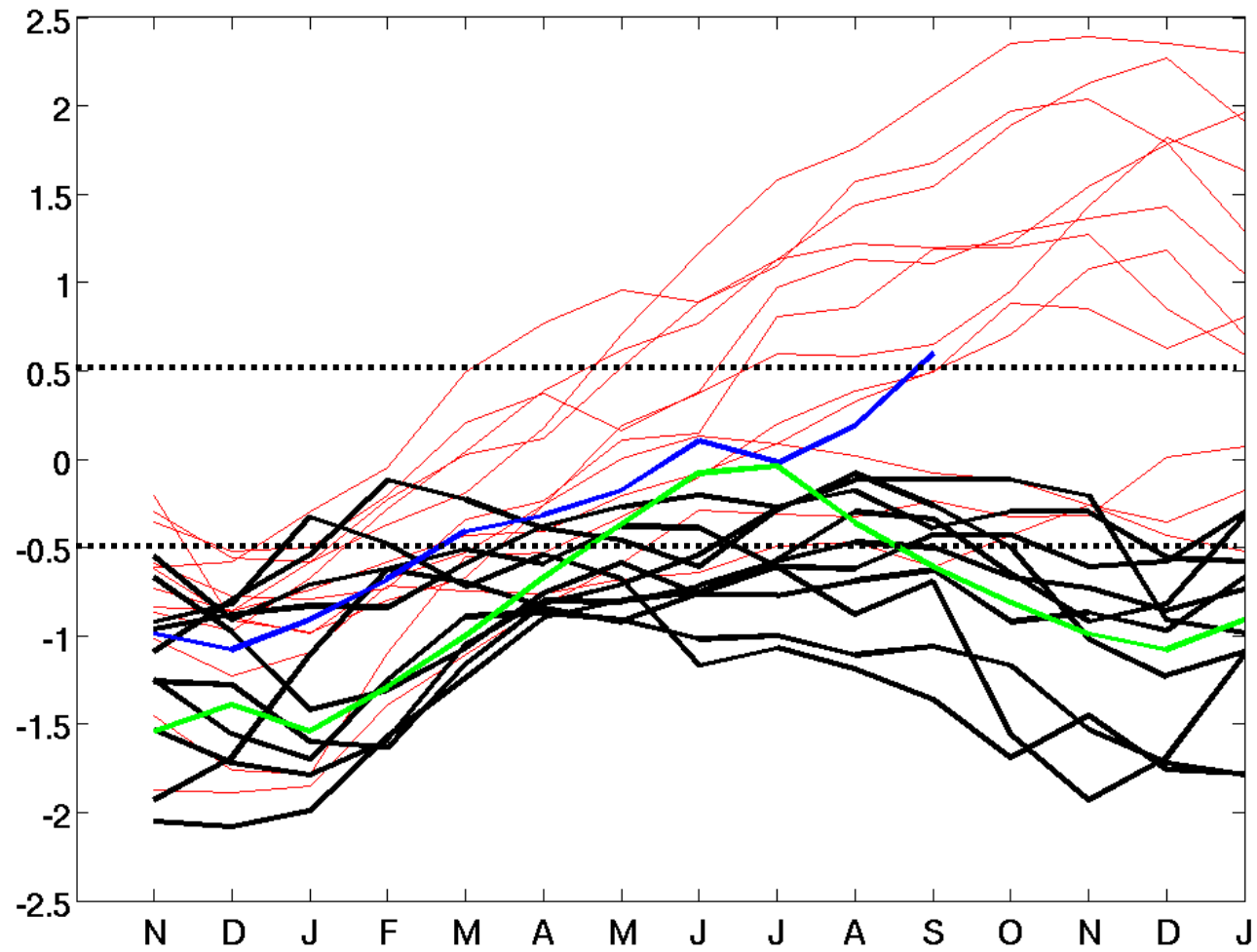
- ongoing La Niña conditions in the atmosphere over the tropical Indo-Pacific

- Winter 2011-12:

- La Niña strength (based on the Niño-3.4 index) was in the middle of the pack of La Niñas for all winters in the last ~60 years

- U.S. height, temperature, and precipitation anomalies were generally more consistent with the positive Arctic Oscillation/North Atlantic Oscillation than La Niña

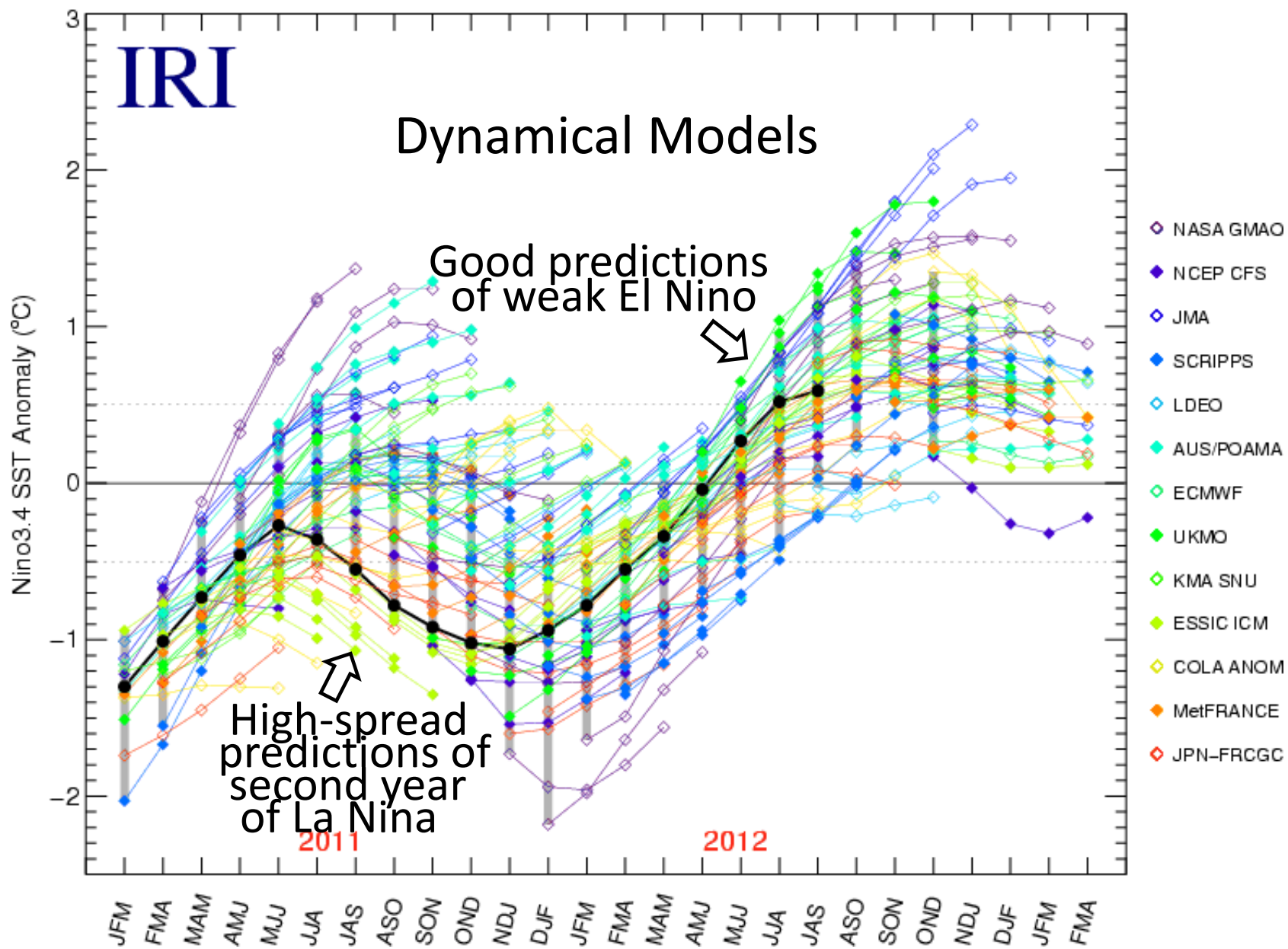
So far in 2012....



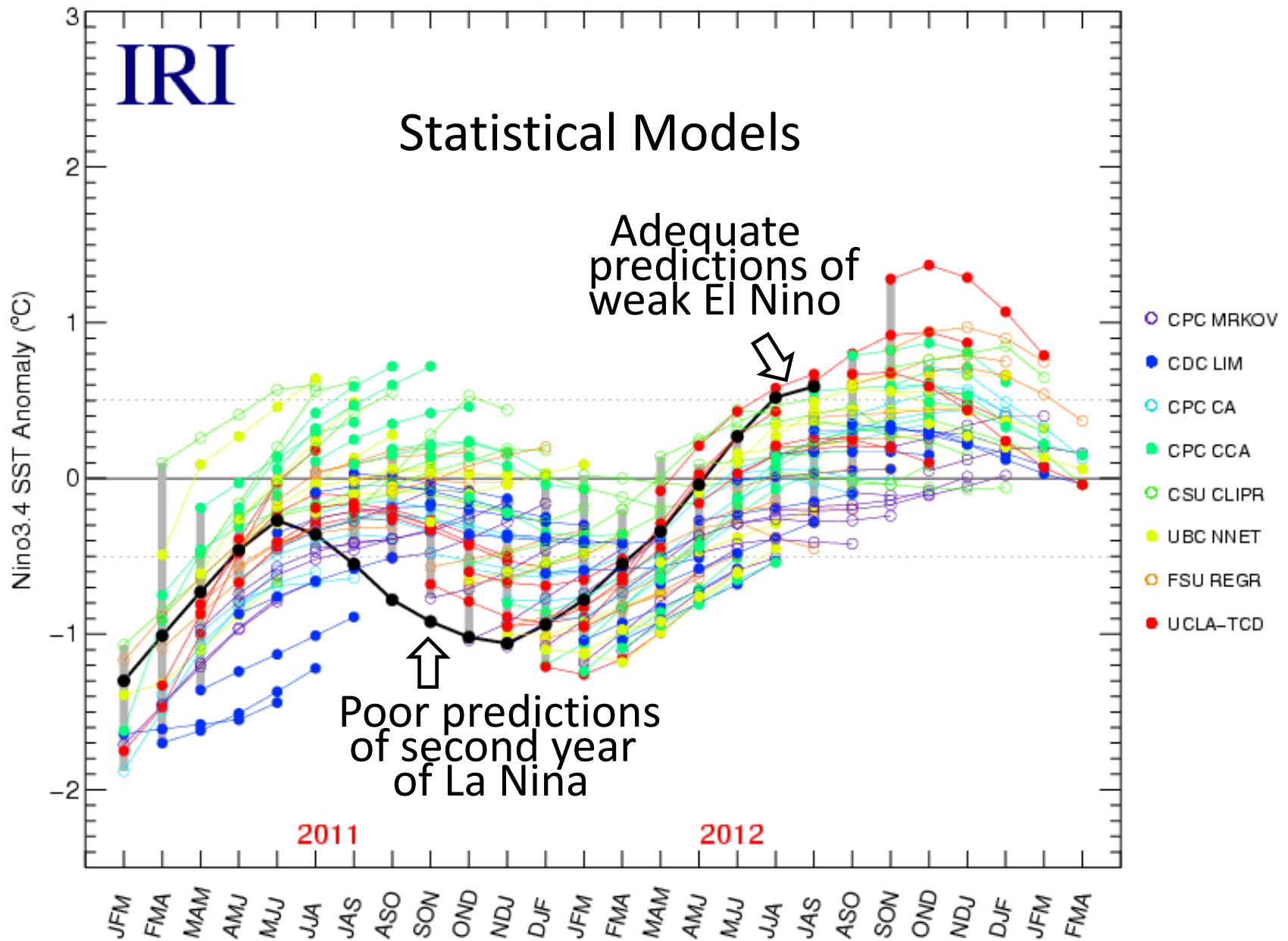
Verification of ENSO forecasts for the 2011-12 ENSO Cycle and Onset of the 2012-13 ENSO Cycle: Plume Forecasts and Official Forecasts

Anthony G. Barnston
IRI, Columbia University, Palisades, NY

ENSO Predictions for dynamical models, Jan 11 – Oct 12



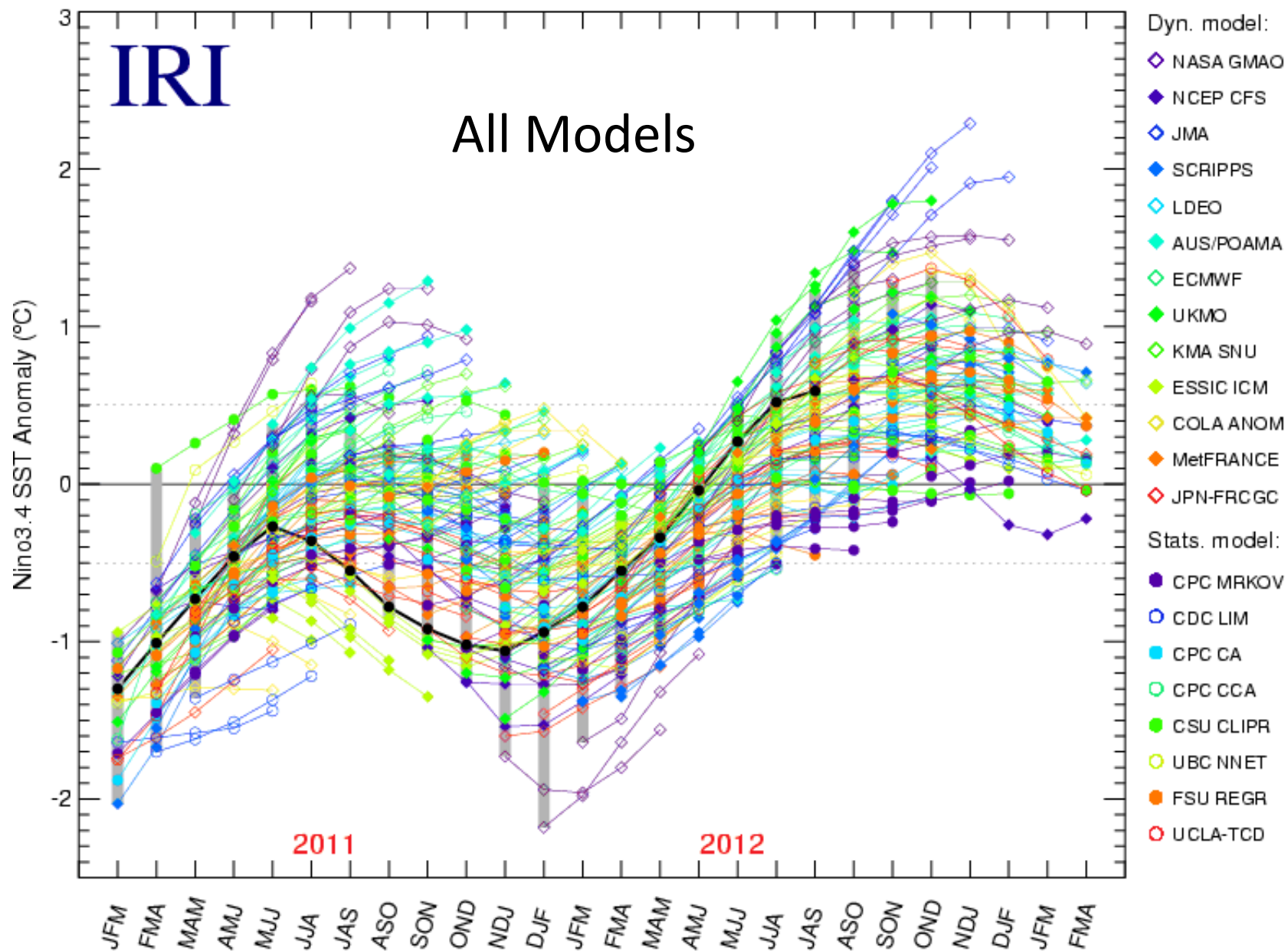
ENSO Predictions for statistical models, Jan 11 – Oct 12



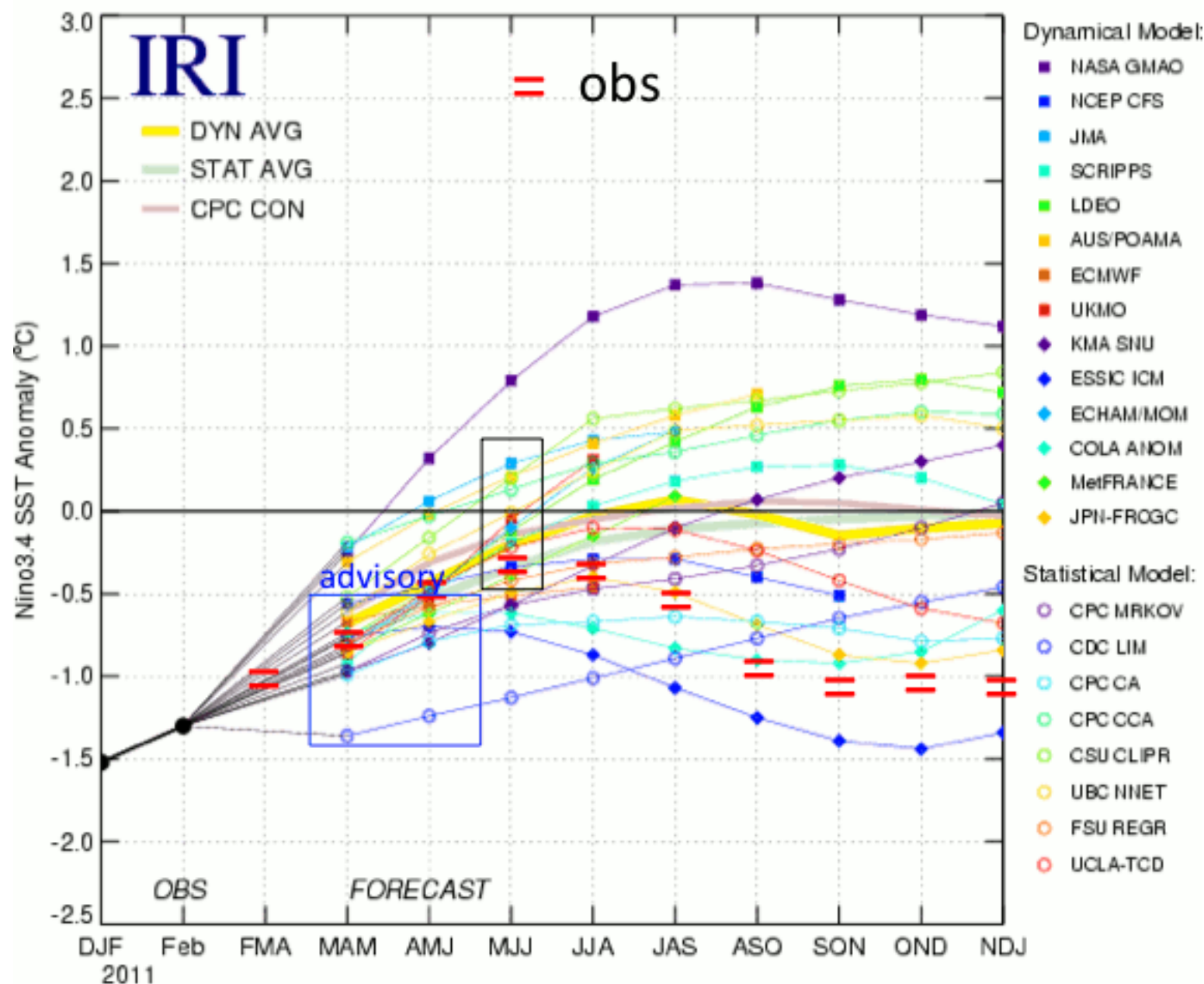
ENSO Predictions from Jan 11 to Oct 2012

IRI

All Models



Model Predictions of ENSO from Mar 2011

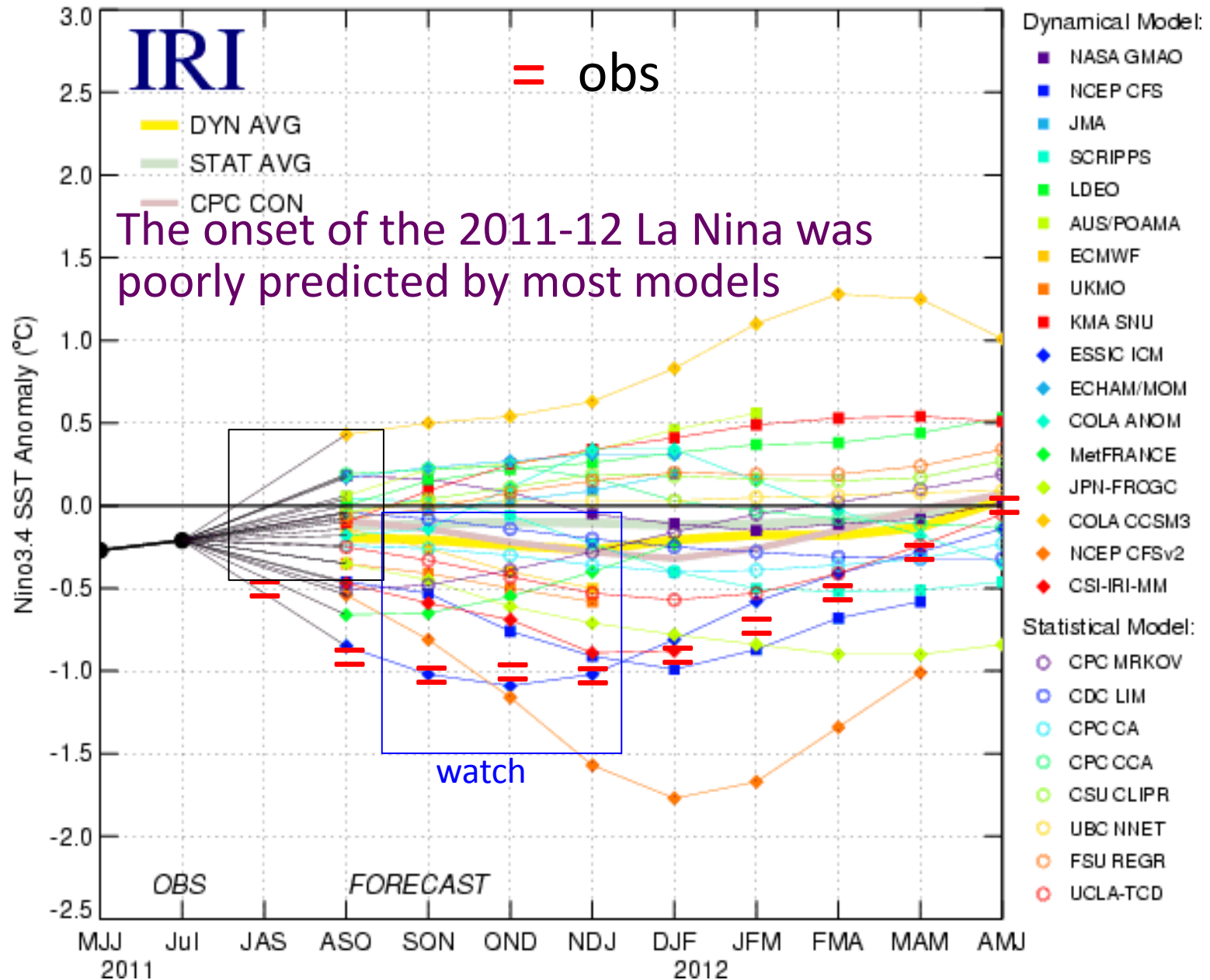


Two most difficult ENSO prediction start times during the 2011-12 study period:

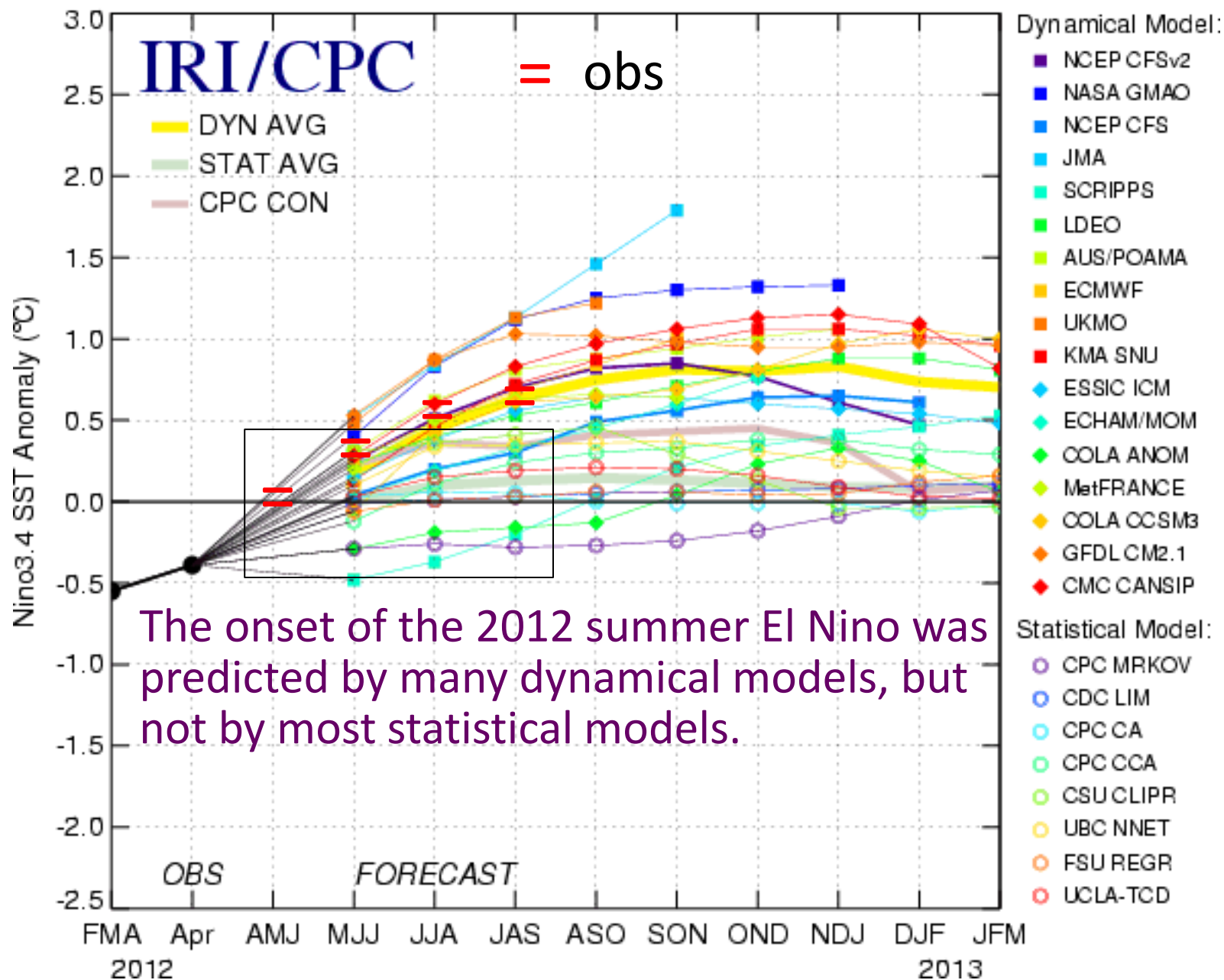
(1) August 2011 (“Is a second La Nina starting?”)

(2) May 2012 (“Is an El Nino about to begin, or not?”)

Model Predictions of ENSO from Aug 2011



Mid-May 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



Verification: LEAD 0 mon

2011 Starts

2012 Starts

Dat	CPC	Con	Dyn	Stat	Dat	CPC	Con	Dyn	Stat
Jan					Jan	ok	ok	ok	ok
Feb					Feb	ok	ok	ok	ok
Mar	ok	ok	ok	ok	Mar	ok	ok	ok	ok
Apr	ok	ok	ok	ok	Apr	ok	ok	ok	ok
May	ok	ok	ok	ok	May	ok	ok	ok	ok
Jun	ok	ok	ok	ok	Jun	ok	ok	ok	F
Jul	F	F	F	F	Jul	ok	ok	ok	ok
Aug	F	F	F	F	Aug				
Sep	ok	ok	F	F	Sep				
Oct	ok	ok	ok	F	Oct				
Nov	ok	ok	ok	ok					
Dec	ok	ok	ok	ok	%	.88	.88	.80	.67

Verification: LEAD 2 mon

2011 Starts

2012 Starts

Dat	CPC	Con	Dyn	Stat	Dat	CPC	Con	Dyn	Stat
Jan					Jan		ok	ok	ok
Feb					Feb	ok	ok	ok	F
Mar	ok	ok	ok	ok	Mar		ok	ok	ok
Apr		ok	ok	ok	Apr		F	ok	F
May	F	F	F	F	May	F	ok	ok	F
Jun		F	F	F	Jun				
Jul		F	F	F	Jul				
Aug	ok	F	F	F	Aug				
Sep	ok	ok	F	F	Sep				
Oct	ok	ok	ok	ok	Oct				
Nov	ok	ok	ok	ok					
Dec		ok	ok	ok	%	.75 (.63)	.67	.67	.47

Conclusions

Two northern spring predictability barriers challenged the models during 2011-2012:

(1) April – August 2011, following a significant La Nina

(2) April – June 2012, following a second (weaker) La Nina

(1) In northern spring 2011, the **CPC consolidation** (regression from 4 models) and the **CPC's ENSO outlook** verified better than the dynamical dynamical models alone, and the dynamical models alone verified better than the statistical models alone. **The second La Nina year snuck up on all, but was missed to greatest degree by the statistical models.**

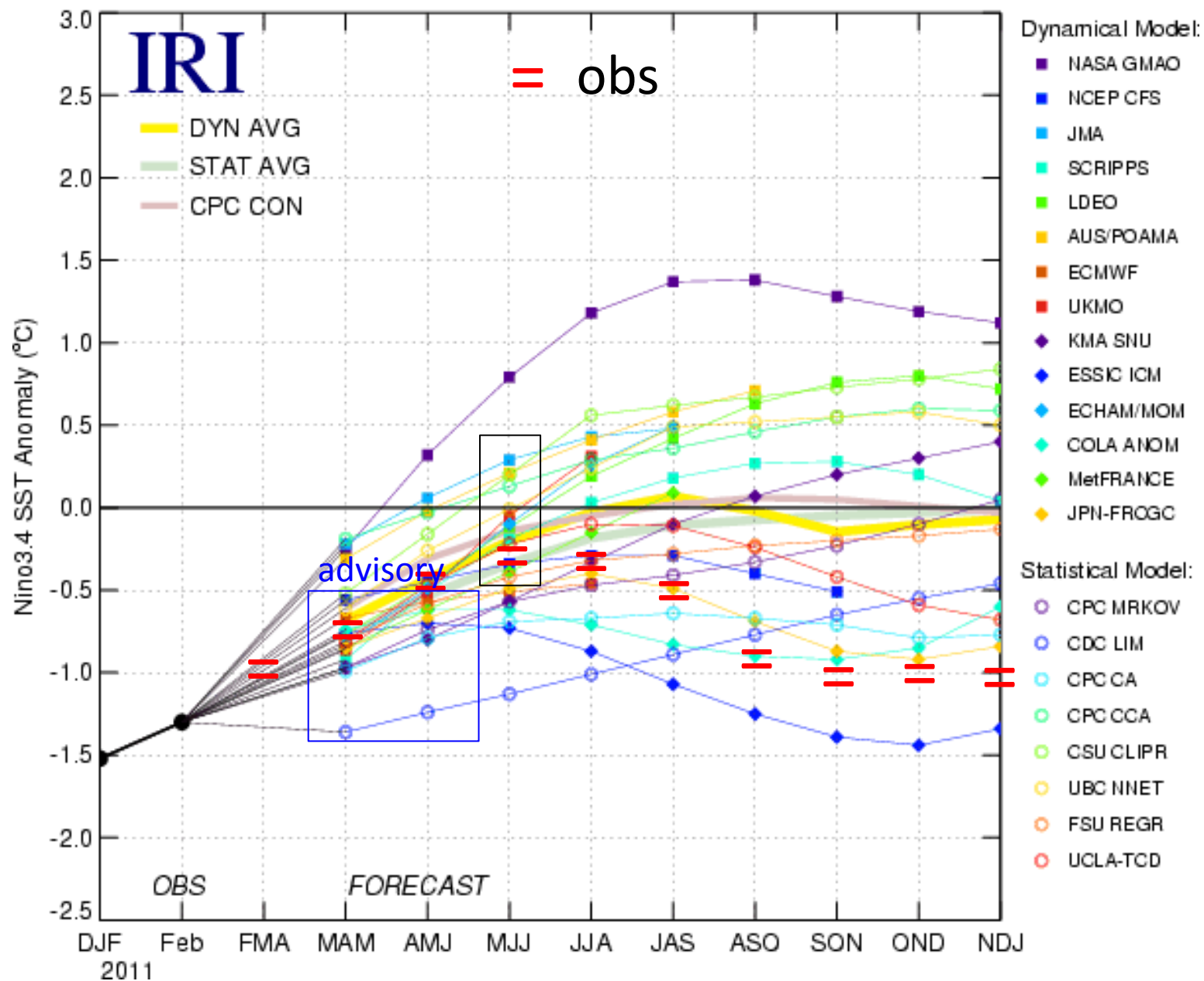
(2) In northern spring 2012, the statistical models were least forthcoming regarding development of El Nino. But whether the weak summer El Nino will last into autumn is doubtful.

Conclusions

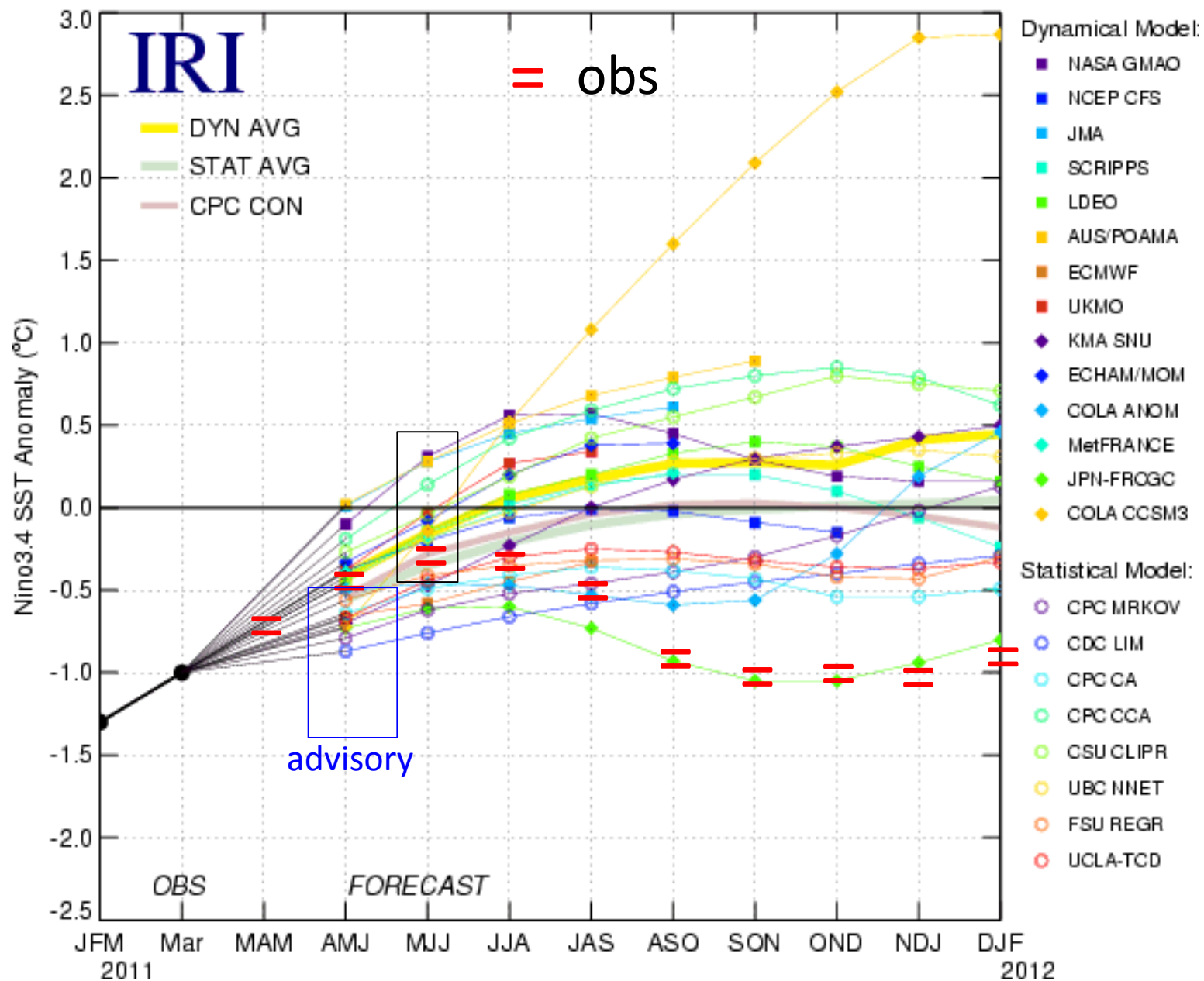
Overall, the CPC's ENSO outlooks verified better than the three objective model systems examined here, but no 2-month (or longer) lead forecasts were issued in 7 out of the 15 verifiable start times except to express large uncertainty and fairly vague expectations regarding deviations from climatological probabilities. In those cases, the model systems were most likely to fail.

Individual plume predictions as shown in the preceding animation follow.

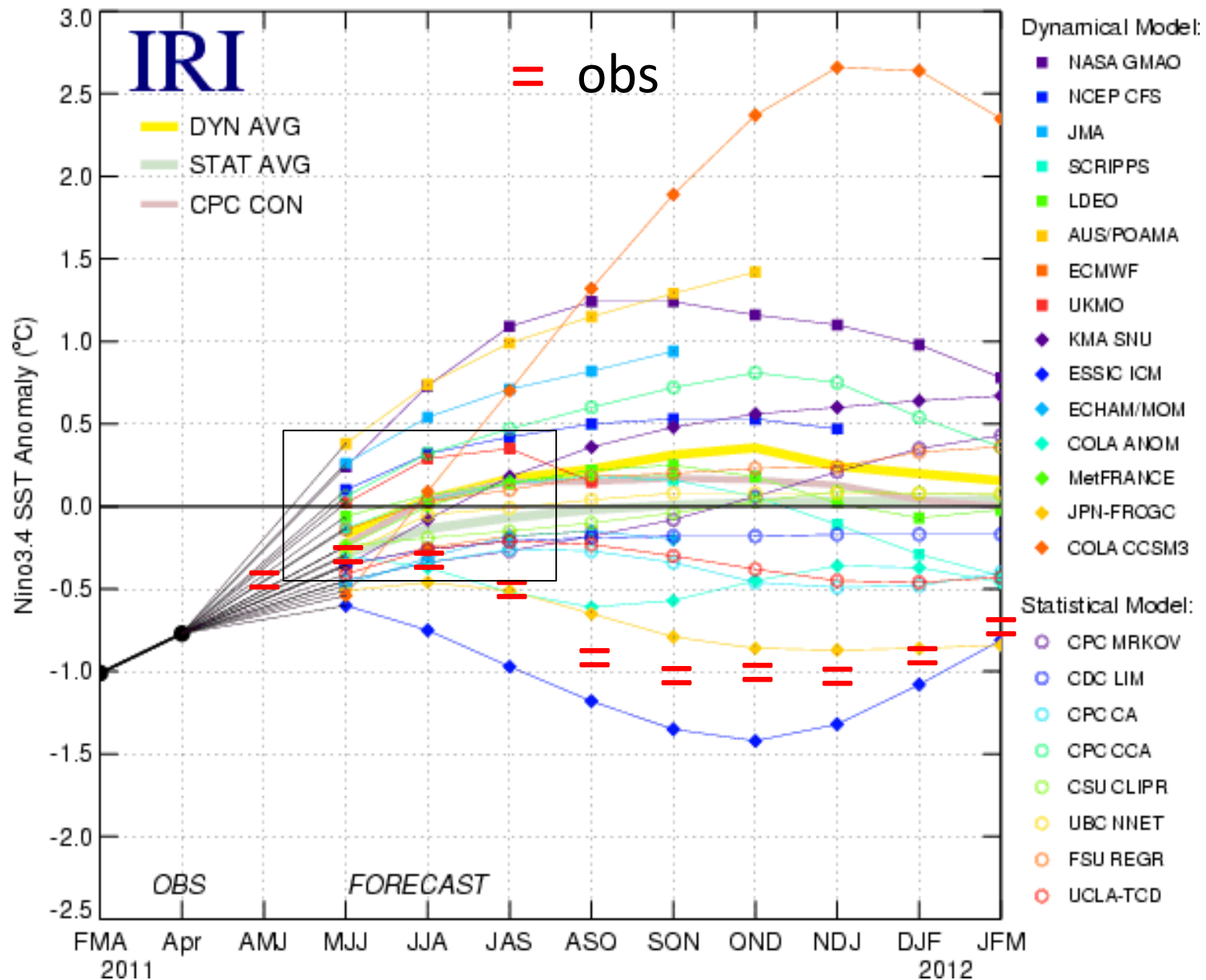
Model Predictions of ENSO from Mar 2011



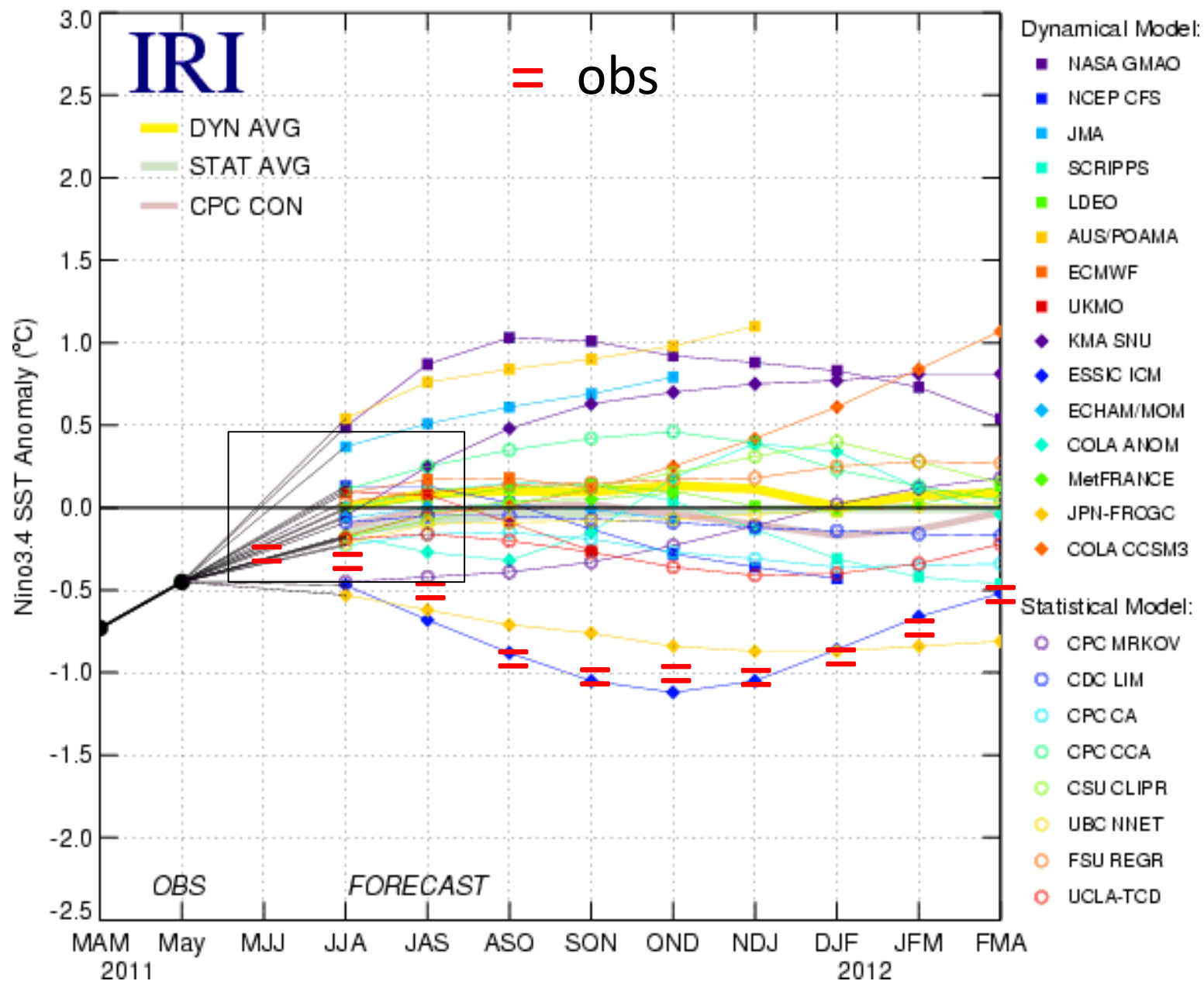
Model Predictions of ENSO from Apr 2011



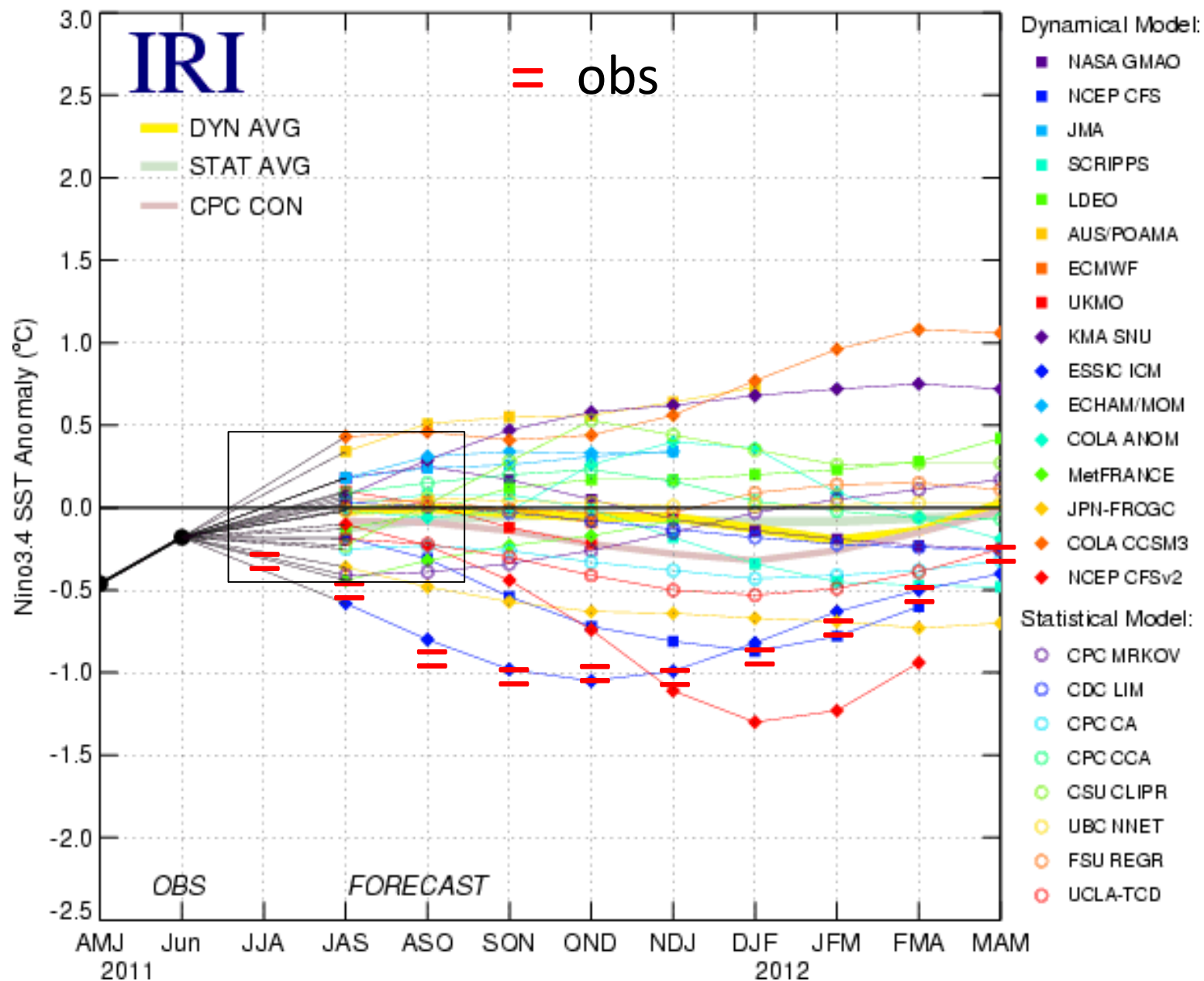
Model Predictions of ENSO from May 2011



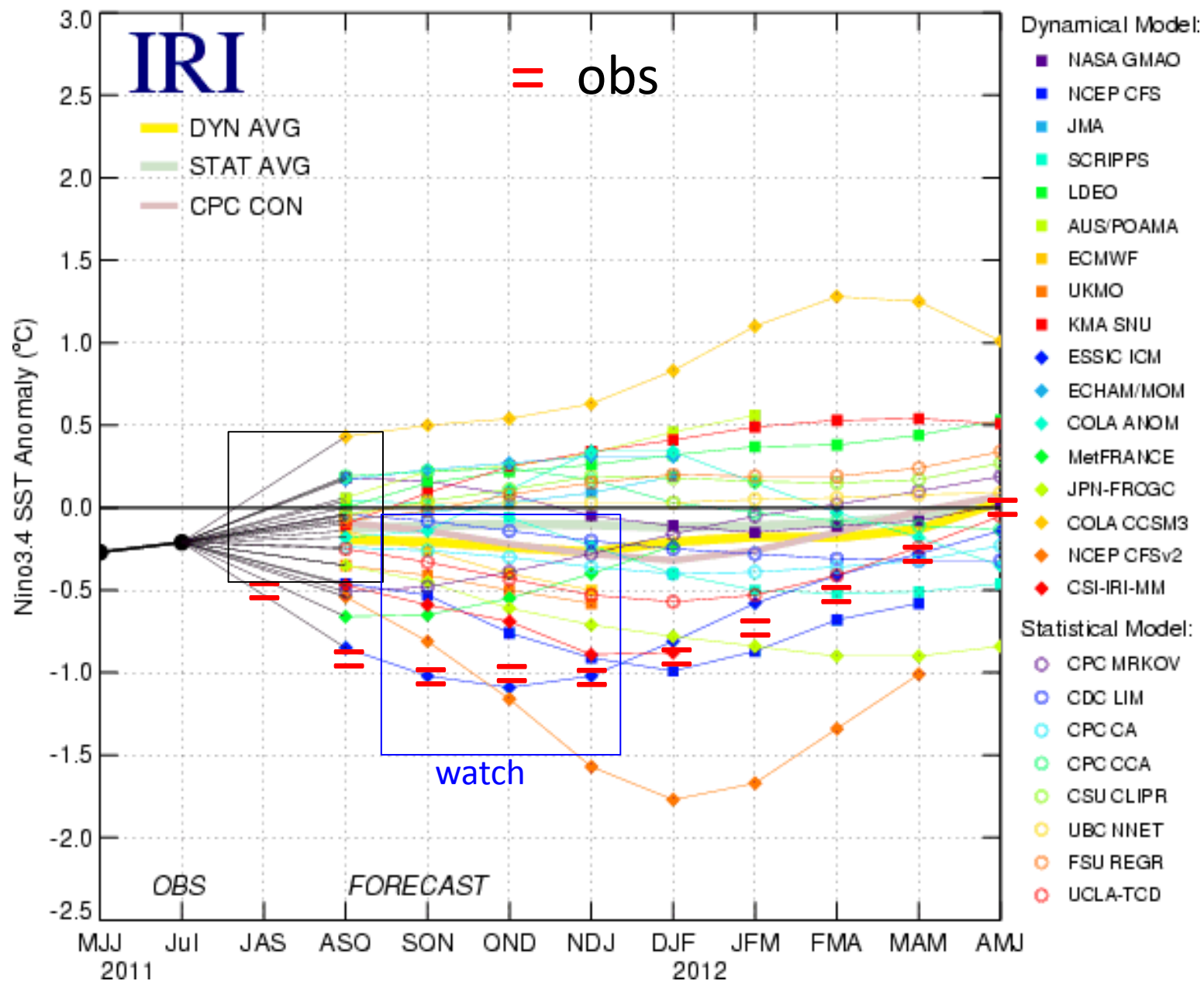
Model Predictions of ENSO from Jun 2011



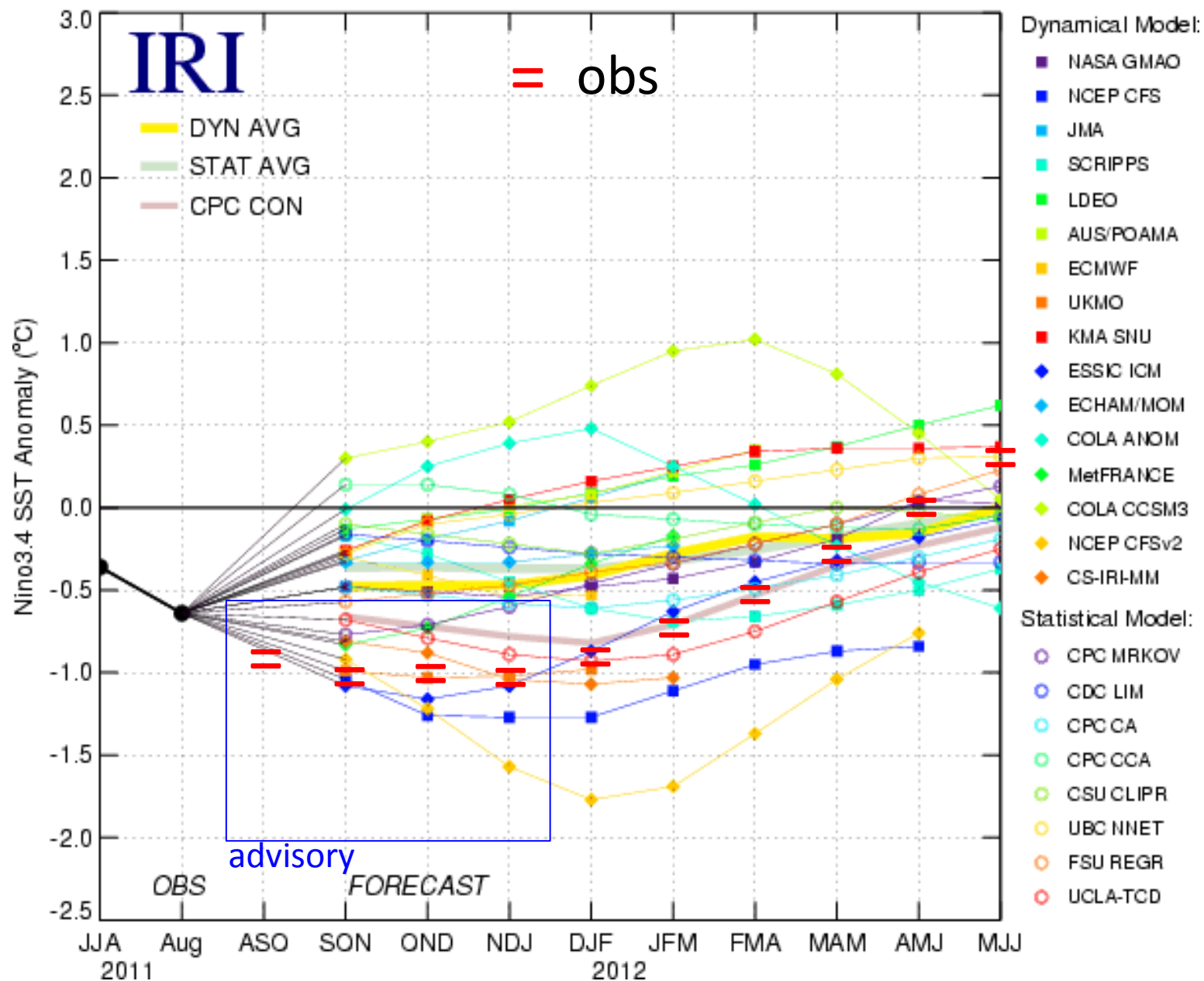
Model Predictions of ENSO from Jul 2011



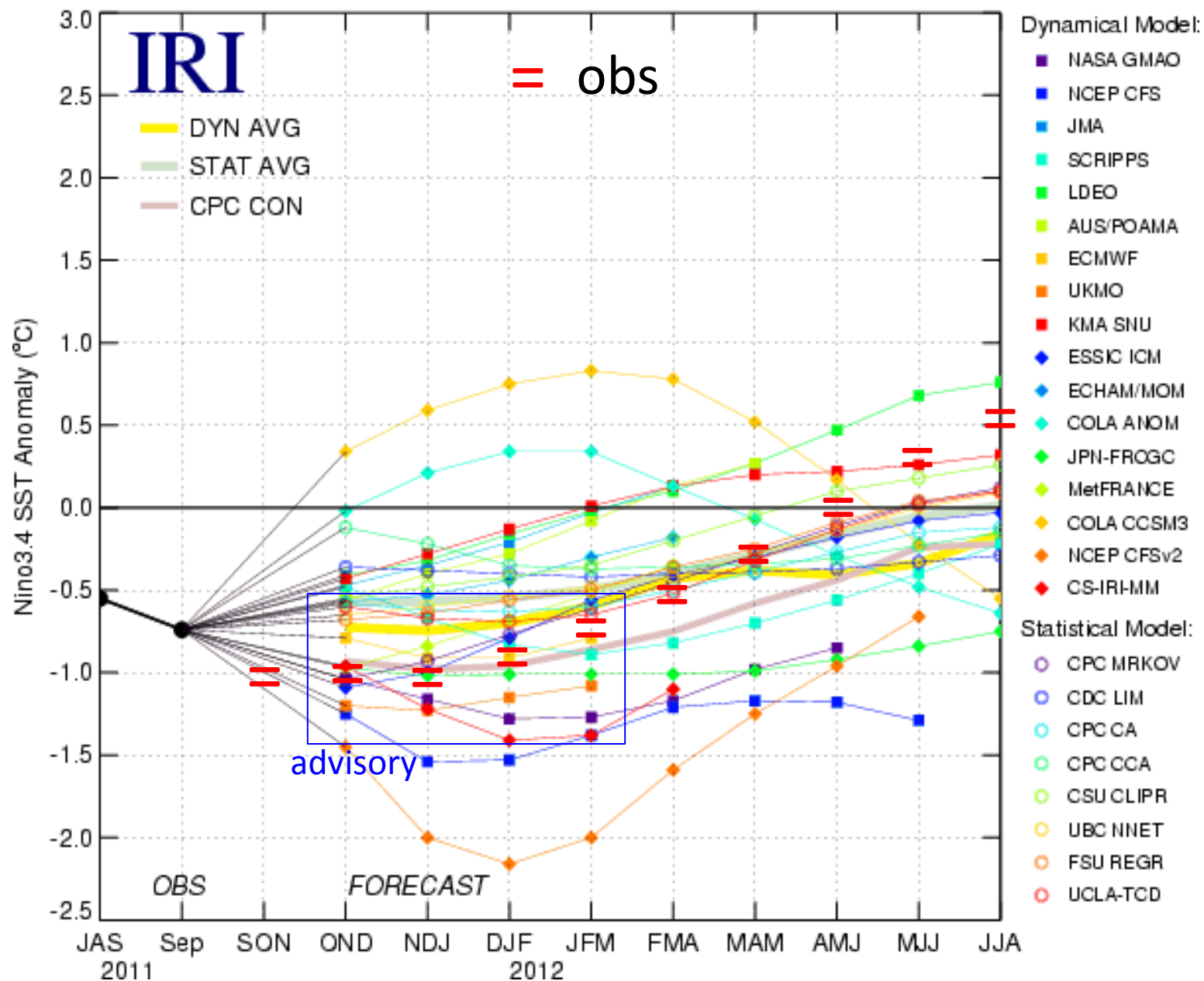
Model Predictions of ENSO from Aug 2011



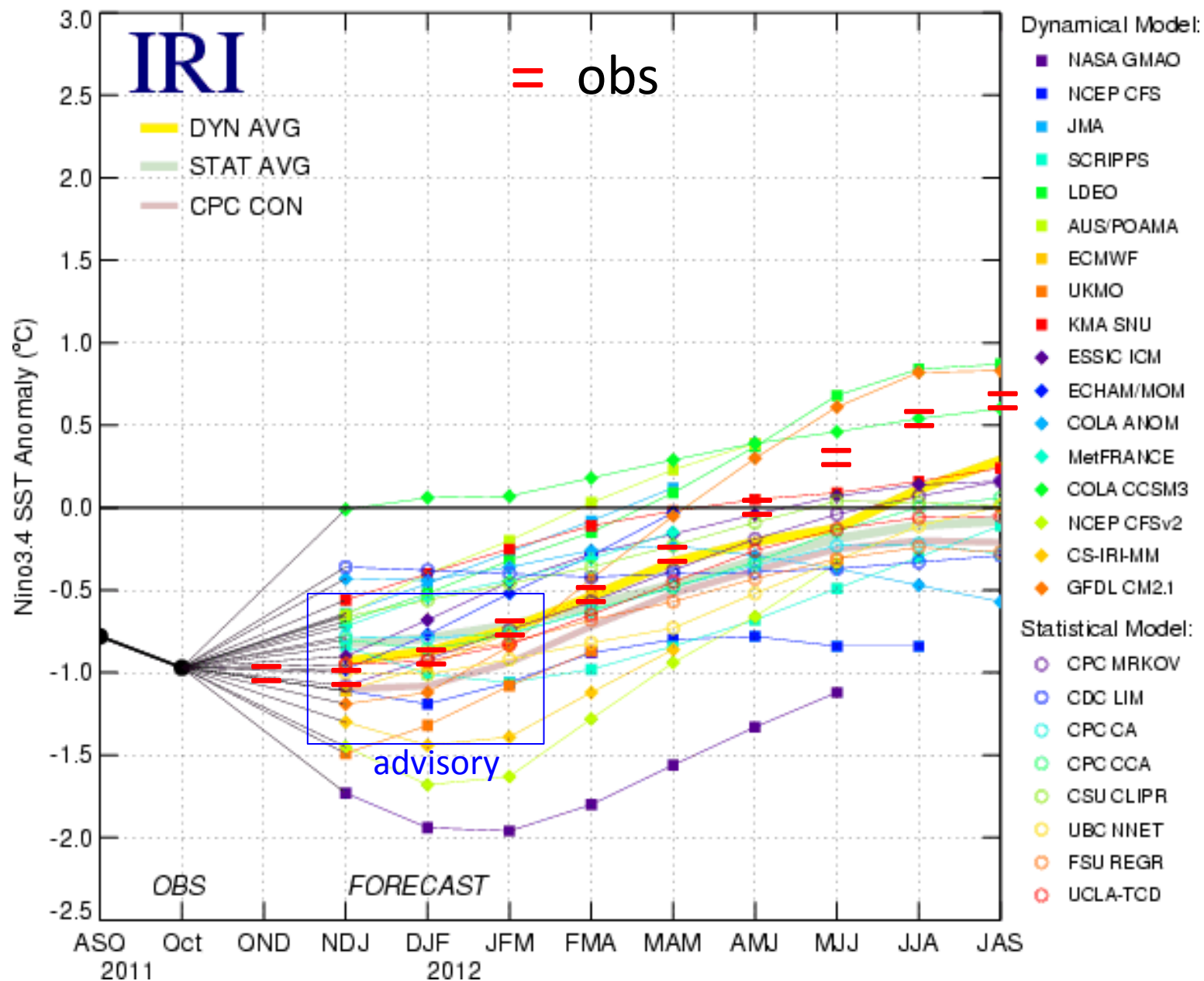
Model Predictions of ENSO from Sep 2011



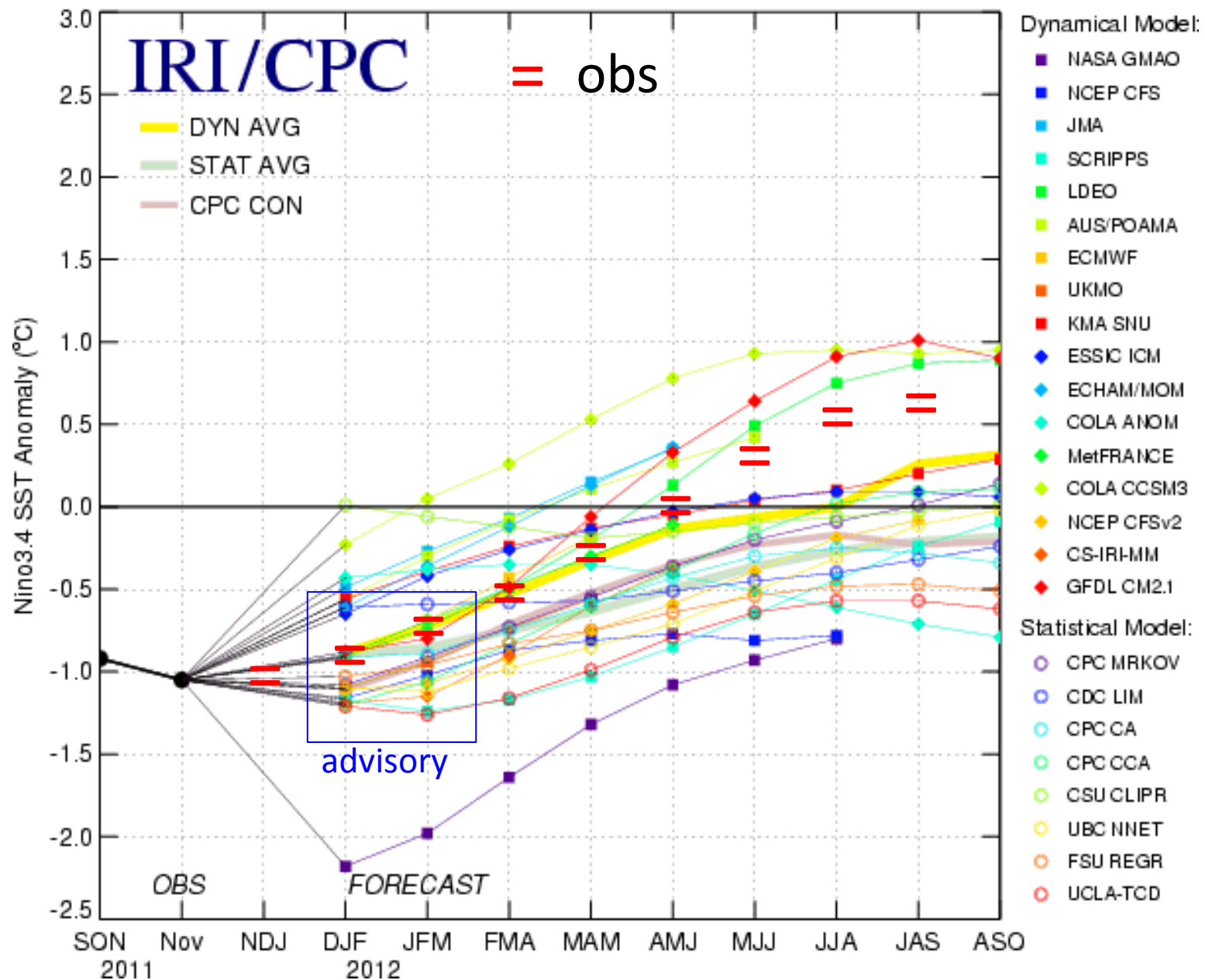
Model Predictions of ENSO from Oct 2011



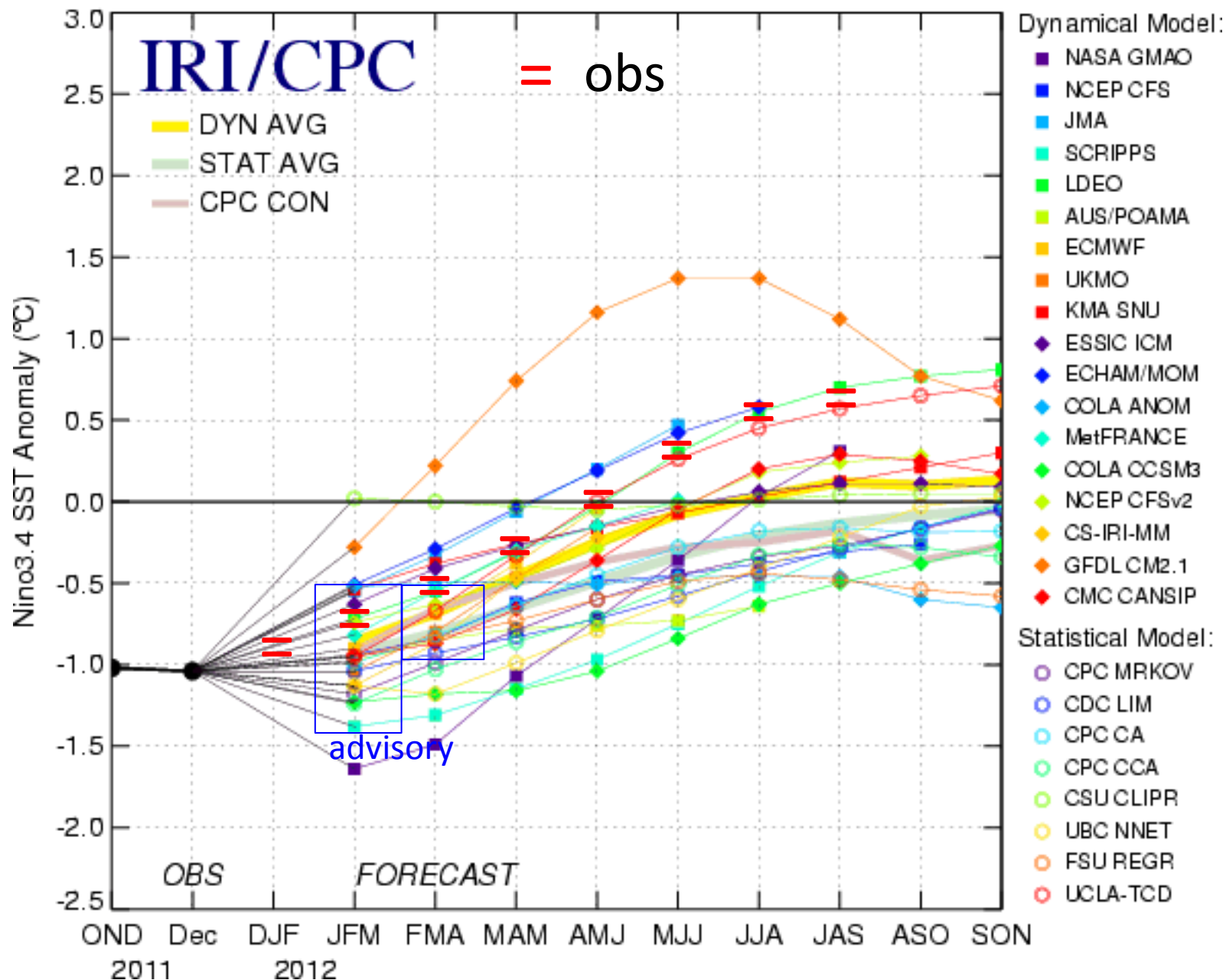
Model Predictions of ENSO from Nov 2011



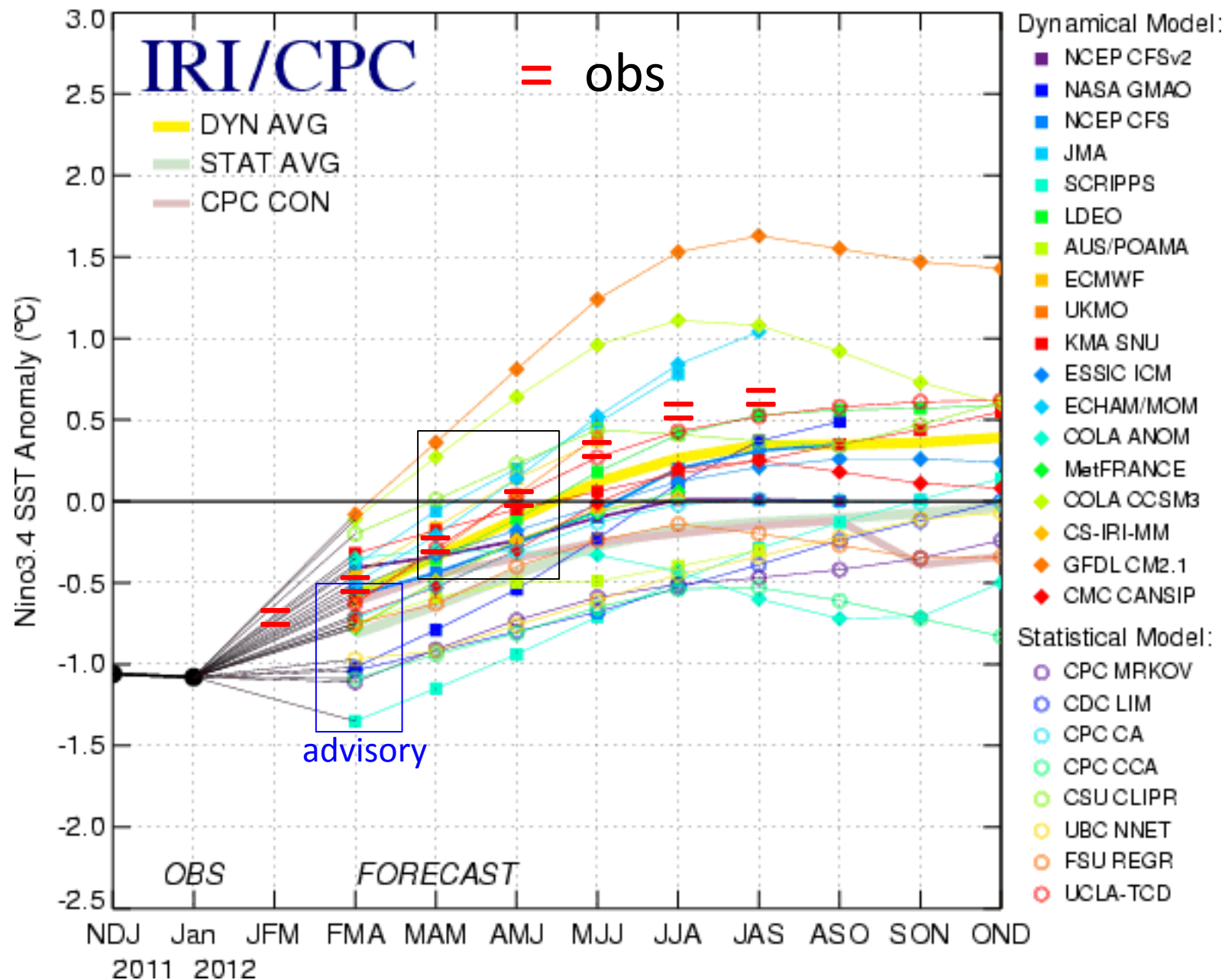
Model Predictions of ENSO from Dec 2011



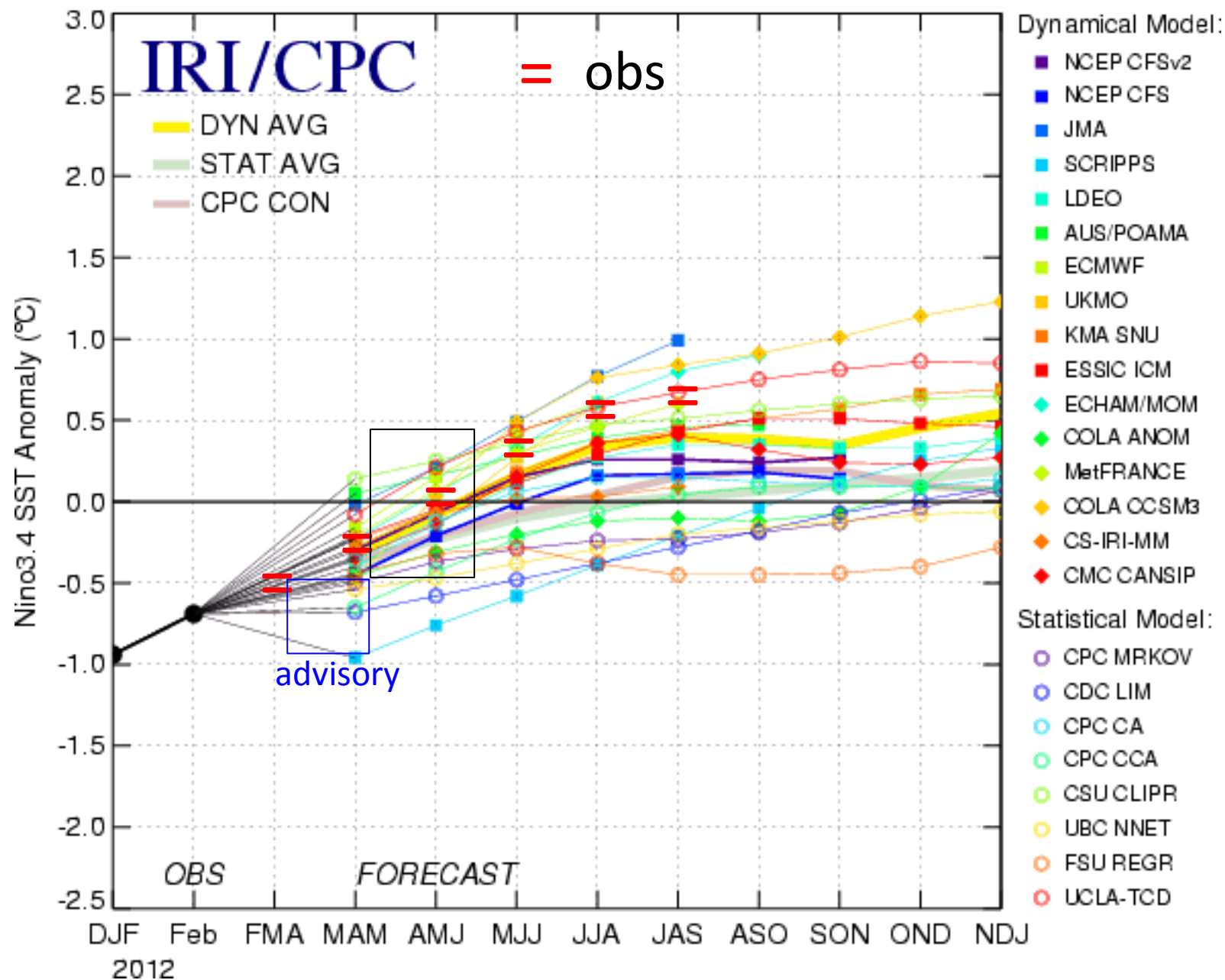
Mid-Month Plume of Model ENSO Predictions from Jan 2012



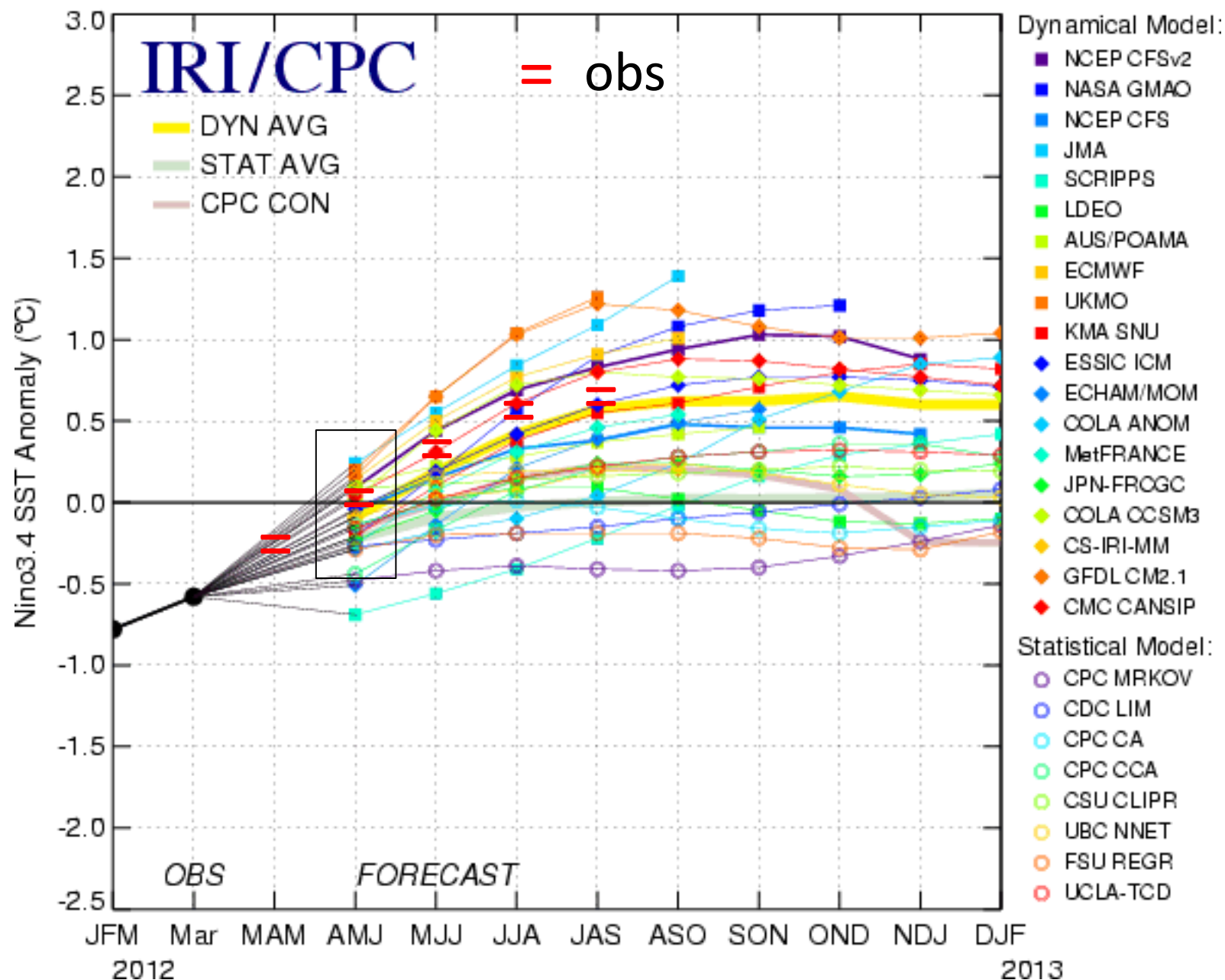
Mid-Feb 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



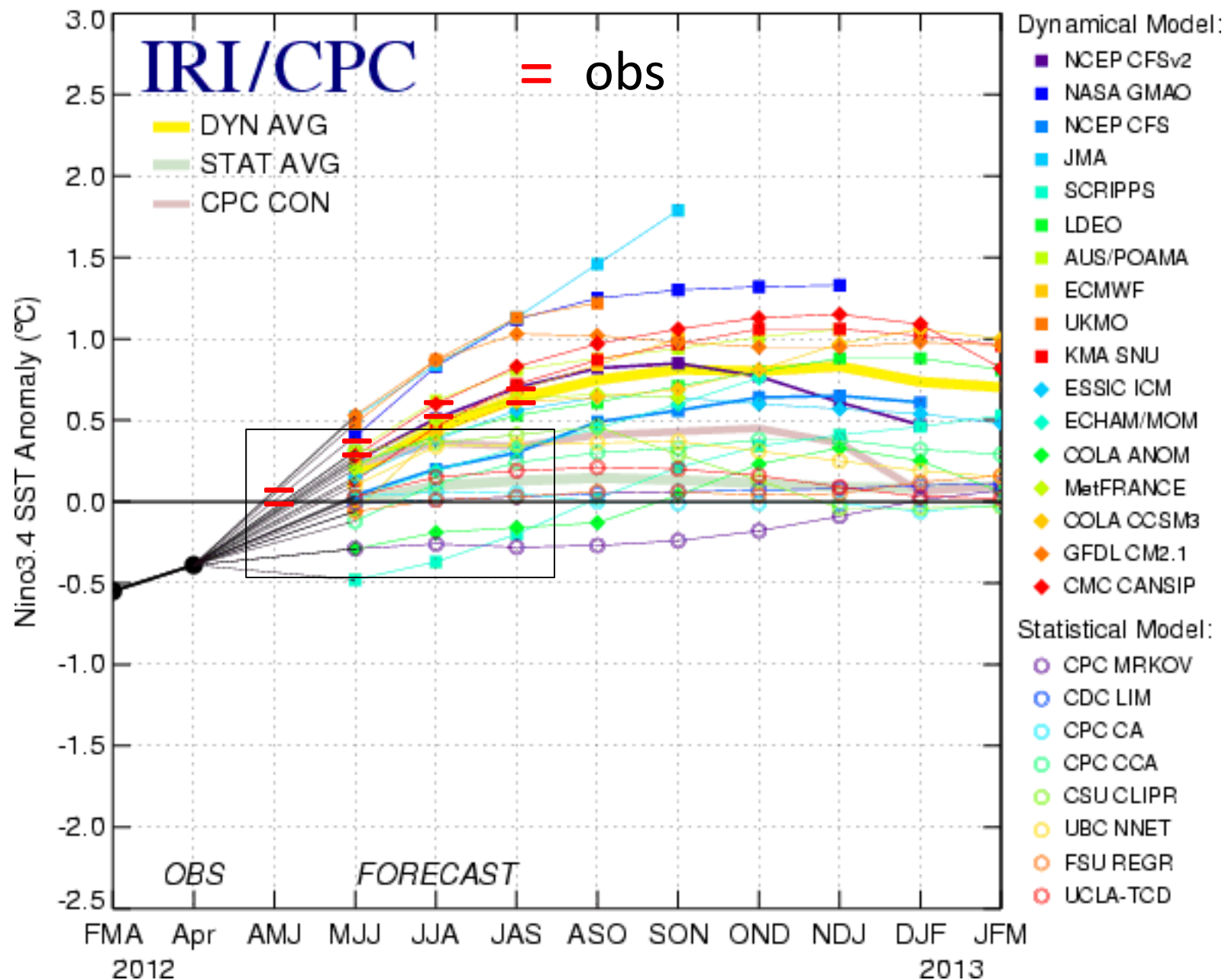
Mid-Mar 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



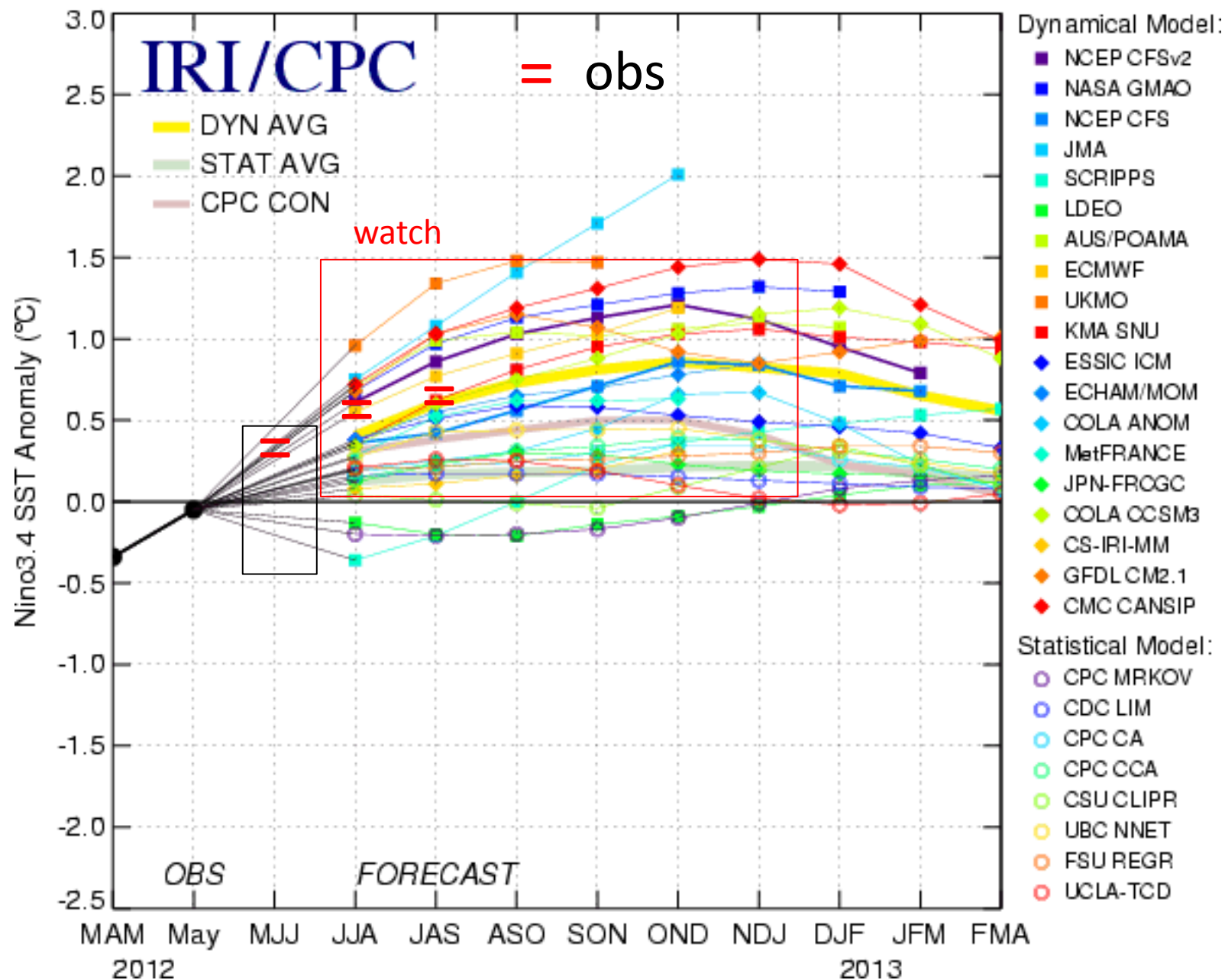
Mid-Apr 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



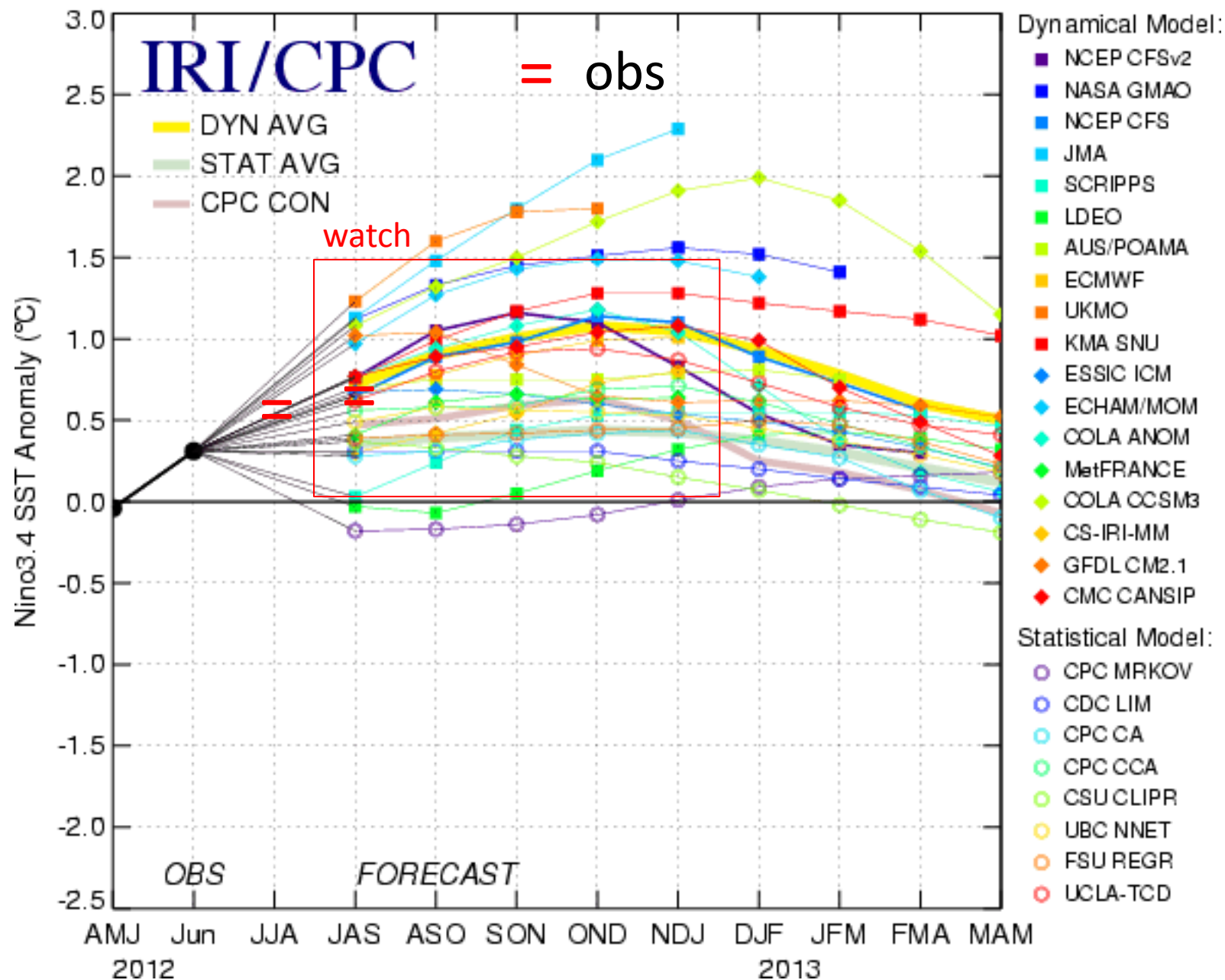
Mid-May 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



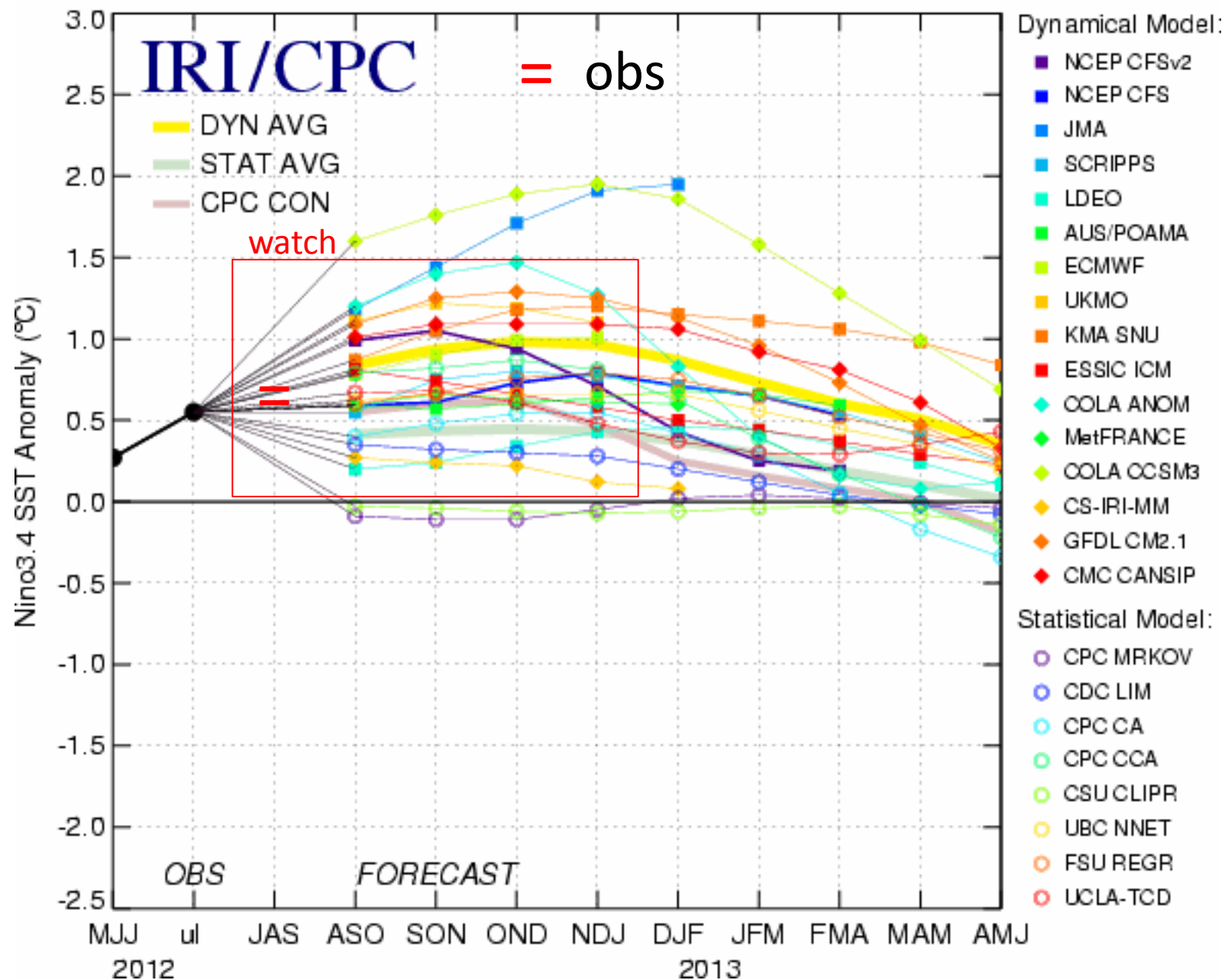
Mid-Jun 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



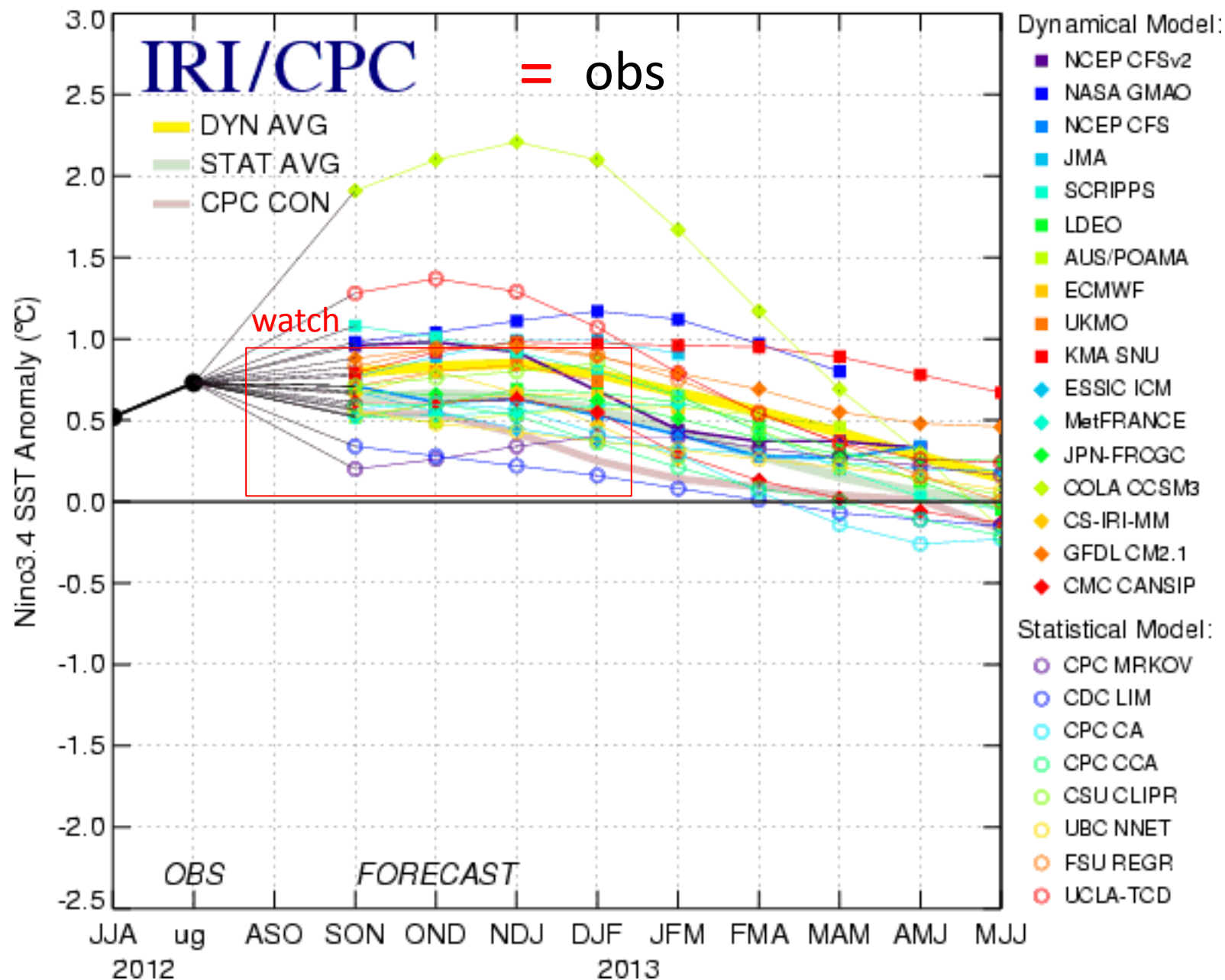
Mid-Jul 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



Mid-Aug 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



Mid-Sep 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions



Mid-Oct 2012 Plume of Model ENSO Predictions

